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W. L. C. 1

Gothic

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The Author's Remarks,

READ BEFORE THE LIVERPOOL ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL
SOCIETY, AT ITS MEETING ON FEBRUARY 22ND, 1854.

THE study of English Architecture is one of the greatest and most important that a nation can take upon itself, and if its high position as a Fine Art is to be maintained, the hopes of ages will be realized, and all nations aspire for that honour, which is the glory of all creative power.

The revival of Christian Architecture, in this country, has been hailed with a joyous smile; and there are hopes of the time when Englishmen shall ameliorate those principles which the great Architects of the middle ages were so successful in. Time, it is hoped, will reveal all those mysteries which yet darken the mind of this soul-stirring period; then will the spirit which gives enlightenment to the understanding shine with all that lustre which is known to give distinction to the lofty and pure sentiments of man.

But the period in which we live is remarkable for its sudden outbursts of change. The ever-moving hand of Time has brought to our view the wonders of a scientific age; and, revealing with an awful rapidity the gigantic power of the nineteenth century, prostrates with a heavy stroke the ancient principles of much that was famous in by-gone days. Schemes of enterprise are visible in every city, and the

apathy that once clothed our ancient towns with so much sluggishness, is giving way to the demands of modern culture; even the obscure village is become the recipient of a gratifying ambition proportionate to the chances of speculation. Impatient minds are flashing on amidst the thickening foam of an overwhelming tide, one that bears upon its waves the still to be dreaded darkness of an unknown future.

The arguments in favour of false principles may be perceived in the common wares of domestic utility; they are likewise exemplified in our streets and in the homes of the people, but more especially in the saloons of the rich, where the gay pageantry of modern fashion destroys the organization of those laws by which the beautiful in Art is created. If the construction and adornment of English buildings were entirely based upon Christian principles, the absurdities of modern fashion might be recognized by those who are now too frivolous and capricious in their ideas to determine upon what is most proper, or what they themselves most desire.

The various departments of Christian Art have had some few extreme thinkers, and the energy of noble minds is still devoted to the same good cause, leading the student on to redeem a void in the annals of time.

Who can call to mind the once fair palaces that adorned the ancient cities of Jerusalem, Corinth, Athens, and others, without feeling that they are no more? For, like the mighty Babylon, they have fallen; and all their greatness, all their splendour, is turned into a tale to be told by the traveller, who, regretting the loss of cities, can call to mind one that mourned over a people notorious in the philosophy of wickedness. The follies of the past must ever be regretted, and we may fill our eyes with tears in vain for losses irrecoverably gone.

But where, oh England! where art thou? Is it by the remnants of thy past glories that we yet remember thee? or is thy palm of true chivalry yet to be won by nobler deeds than those which fighting men were fain to make so terrible in the "accursed and unquiet wrangling days" of England's bitter hour? There is no true chivalry unless it emanates from a pure heart. The actions of men are inglorious when they sacrifice the honour of God for their own personal valour or fame.

Since this period the world has undergone many changes, and England can bear testimony to her infatuated patriotism. Yet is there a pure and noble spirit still slumbering amidst the almost ruined fabrics of an age more merciless than pitiful. Come forth, ye venerable reformers, and bid the spirit rise!

The history of every nation is a key to its Architecture; therefore it is necessary that we should look into the sad experience of the past, intermingled as the varied subjects of piety and wrong may be.

The chain of thought and mind which held the great secrets of mediæval design within the breasts of the Middle-age Architects has been broken;—by what causes it is needless now to enquire.

The Art of Architecture is still fine and noble, and has grown to prove itself the master-work of ages. Its pre-eminence can be better understood when the powers of the mind are capable of receiving those impressions it is so well calculated to make. Mankind are materially affected by the comparative strength and appearance of an edifice, when the general proportions are consistent with their purpose and meaning, and when the details are in accordance with the laws of construction, true taste, and artistic feeling.

The study of Christian Architecture is not only interesting in point of theory, but its influence should secure to every right-minded man the grand principles of solidity, truth, and beauty. The sweetness of harmony should dwell there, and the grandeur of majesty be enthroned with all that becoming dignity of character which is her great prerogative.

Many of the errors perpetrated in the building and enlargement of modern cities have been partly discovered, but no satisfactory attempt has been made to give them that air of cheerfulness and comfort which an English city should have, which emphatically becomes a Christian people, and which none but a Christian people can desire or expect. How strange it is that this nation should disregard its identity with Christian Architecture! How wrong to slight the genius of our forefathers, and seek in a foreign land a style of Architecture whose once proud props now form but a region of broken pillars! Why exhume the remains of Pompeii? Are there no architectural arrangements more worthy than those? or are the Architects of the

nineteenth century incapable of originality in architectural design and arrangement? Fastidious age! thou art inexorable. Will the multifariousness of ordinary occupations remain unsuggestive of no higher and better arrangements than the multangular forms which great and modern cities present? Truly, the dull repetition of Grecian façades has turned the Architecture of our streets into a monotonous farce.

In the formation of a city, the primary object most worthy of consideration should be the well-being of its inhabitants. Few cities, however, give sufficient evidence of the establishment of such a rule.

The Architecture of the present day is ill suited to influence an observer in discovering the real use or meaning of a building, when not only is the character of the style represented unnatural in this country, but, perhaps, a facsimile of the palace of some Roman Emperor or Turkish Sultan is become a British bank or merchant's warehouse. Foreigners must be amazed at a practice so absurd, especially in a professedly Christian country, seeing, as they must do, and admiring the many relics of ancient English Art.

When the ancient halls, and other domestic buildings of our noble ancestors, were erected, there was much building to purpose and effect. Indeed, architects could scarcely err in the principle of their designs, if founded upon the same simple plan of truthfulness and beauty. To secure so desirable an end, advantage must be taken of those improvements in design and household arrangements, which modern science and the improved state of our social condition have rendered so desirable. In following out the truthfulness of ancient principles, it does not necessarily follow that an ingenious architect becomes a veritable copyist.

The buildings which constitute the homes of the nobles of this day, are, in many instances, unworthy the possession of such families; at least those that were erected some time subsequent to the Reformation. It is painful to the true nobility when they look upon those large and costly mansions, for they bear upon their forbidding countenances the marks of a debased and disreputable taste. No warmth of feeling or welcome smile of comfort to the passer-by is there in these cold, meagre-looking dwellings. Dismantled of all that

should be counted great or grand in Art, an atmosphere of selfishness seems to breathe from the inhospitable walls, denying to their owners the enjoyment of that sacred harmony which Nature and Art have intended for one common purpose. The principles of Gothic Architecture are so consistent with the tastes, habits, and requirements of a Christian people, that its applicability to all honourable purposes* cannot be questioned. There is not a vestige of ancient Gothic Art remaining but is suggestive of a thousand other beautiful forms, sufficiently original in purpose and meaning for all the demands which a progressive and scientific people may require.

The erection of a public building is an object of much interest and importance, and its appearance when complete has a very powerful tendency either to enlighten the public mind, or lead to false views of what is true, noble, and beautiful in Art.

An architect is in a most essential manner a responsible character; he involves within the circle of his power that of a nation. Not only do his buildings represent his own ability of conception or the contrary, but also the tastes and desires of a community or people are not unfrequently invested in the locality or place of his endeavours, and perpetuated there as monuments, destined to let enlightened travellers and future generations see the exact position it maintains in the Fine Art list of the world's Architectural productions.

But many of the architects who are employed in the development either of Christian Architecture or that of heathen countries, are wholly unfit to place before the learning world a building that should express its real character and use. Depending upon powers which they have not, and heedless of that just censure which contemporary men may inflict upon them, they continue the disgraceful practice of designing buildings which the employer and the employed have great reason to be ashamed of. When England has released herself from the bondage of a prejudiced and biassed mind, she will be free to determine the extent of those anomalies which form the mass of

* The furniture for all Gothic buildings should be of the same style and character. The design for a piece of furniture should never be degraded by any kind of grotesque carvings. If figures or faces are employed in the design, they should not any account be caricatures of individuals, but truthful representations of the subjects desired.

corrupt design in modern Architecture.* She must first discover more fully the deep importance of upholding the principles of Christian Architecture, ere she can hope to appreciate and value them.†

It is very probable that architects will ever differ in matters of taste; some, however, have proved this assertion by an unpardonable digression from the ordinary rules of common decency. Many of our Ecclesiastical, Collegiate, and Domestic buildings, both ancient and modern, contain, as part of their decoration, examples of that class of ornament called the Grotesque. It may be described as having a base and fabulous origin, and if any particular instance of its utility can be adduced for its usage, it is only to symbolise those imaginary beings who are the supposed inhabitants of a region where discord reigns triumphant. Extreme ugliness and vulgar taste are its leading features. For to whatever purposes the ancients ascribed the institution of mimicry in their grotesque carvings, it is certain that no part of the Christian faith requires such unseemly gesticulations in its symbolism, however refractory some of its members may have been. Neither does Gothic Architecture require any ornament beyond that which is natural, pleasing, and instructive.

There is thought to be much character in those ornaments which have been set up as aids to effect a certain style of Architecture called the Tudor. For what are the thousands of nondescripts which decorate the Chapel called Henry the Seventh's,‡ and the new Houses of Parliament? The style that prevailed during this King's reign will ever be eternalised as the prognosticator of a system of ornament which some of the architects of the nineteenth century propagate with a lavishness enthusiastically dangerous.

* Let those who would demand of the nation a power to condemn the unjust practice of erecting buildings unworthy of the meanest position in the land, first enquire to whom that power should be given.

† Architects, like the nation, are divided in their opinions as to the appropriateness of one style more than another. All Christians, however, would, on due consideration, decide in favour of Christian Architecture.

‡ The enquiring student may be tempted to linger awhile, and gaze upon the gorgeous but extravagant display of ornaments which form one of the most attractive features in this chapel; but he must not conclude therefrom, that grotesque characters are at all essential either to the beauty or completeness of a sanctuary.

The Colleges of the learned University of Oxford* are, in many instances, crowded with the most ludicrous figures and faces.† Within the walls even of the otherwise beautiful Magdalene, this abominable and infamous practice has far outrivalled similar attempts at *decoration* in some of the other buildings.

The vaulted ceilings of our cathedrals have often caused us to wonder beneath their sacred canopies. Yet what contrasts are to be found there? The temple is polluted; for the hallowed feelings of the soul are mocked by the representation of some evil demon which the carver has chiselled in the lofty material heaven.‡ The imaginations of that man are monstrously vile, or he could not have defiled a building with satanic masks, whose limits, likewise, were to be so solemnly dedicated to that Great Being Whom we are commanded to magnify with praise in His holy temple.

Gothic Architecture is considered to be more capable of receiving enrichment than any other style. It offers the grandest scope for sculpture and carving that man is capable of inventing. The deep and shadowy recesses may become the receptacles of the most tender

* It is hoped that the authorities to whose care the noble University has been entrusted, will be more careful to preserve that well-merited fame, which has been attributed to those architectural gems of beauty which tower aloft amidst whole ranges of the symmetric and venerable relics of Christian antiquity.

† The design and execution of these carvings are altogether unworthy the protection of a cloister.

‡ Many of the architects and sculptors of the present day, have proved their insincerity to the great cause of Christian Art, by designing and carving those hideous, impious, and injudicious forms which disgrace so many modern churches. They have doubtless been followers of some of the ancient architects and sculptors, who either designed or executed those grotesque and unchaste figures which characterise much of the ornaments of the middle-age buildings, both Ecclesiastical and Domestic. It must also be observed, that but few architects have estimated aright the nature of that responsibility which is now especially attached to their profession. Those who have omitted to do so, should be reminded of the qualifications which are so indispensably necessary to the formation of a character so responsible as that of the Christian Architect. It is certain, that all unseemliness in the Architecture of a building should be rejected by him who has, or at least should have, the full confidence of those parties who require his abilities. It is obvious, then, that he should be endowed with these three great qualifications, refined taste, learning, and piety.

and beautiful flowers. And what is more becoming in sculpture than the modest forms with which the ancient Gothic sculptors draped the better sort of their effigies and figures?

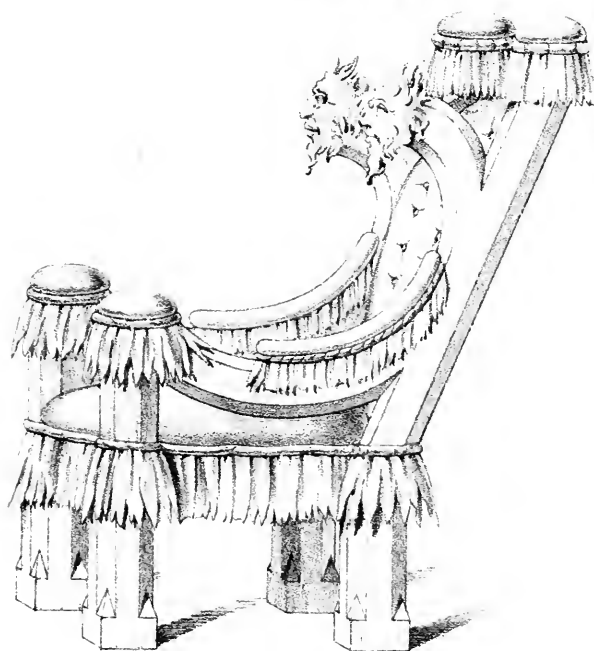
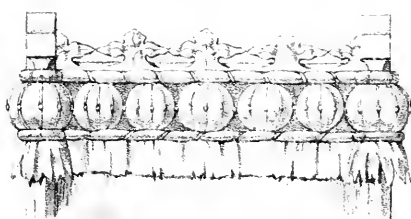
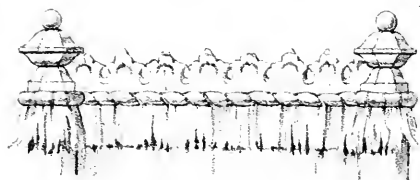
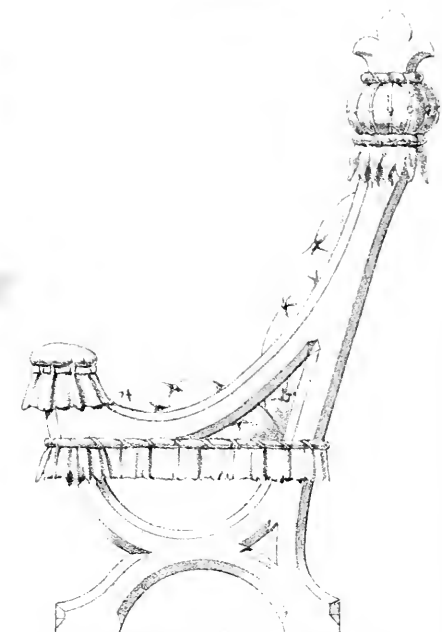
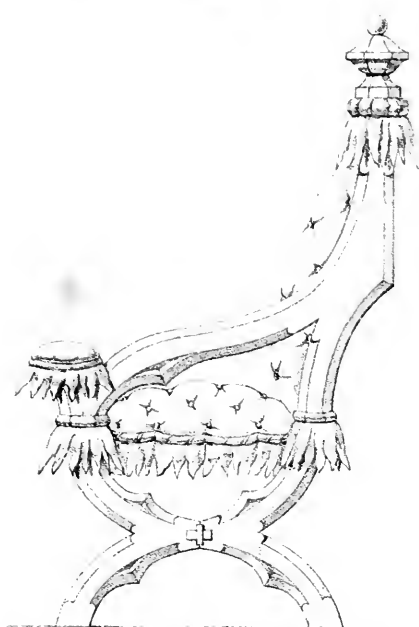
Much might be done to illustrate those passages of Scripture which claim the attention of every human being. The emblems of Virtue, Morality, and Religion, cannot too often meet the eyes of wayfaring men, be the diversity of their pursuits ever so opposed to each other.

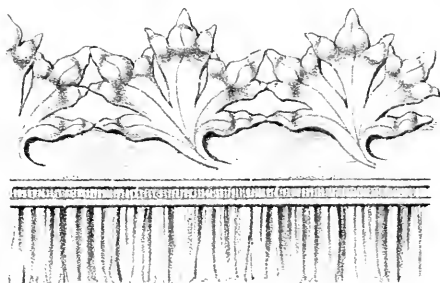
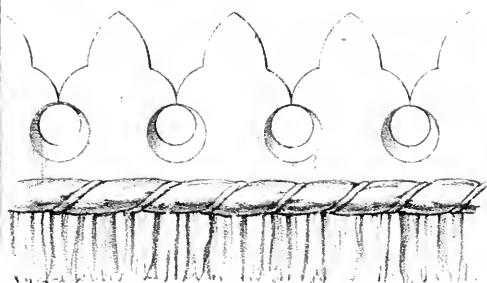
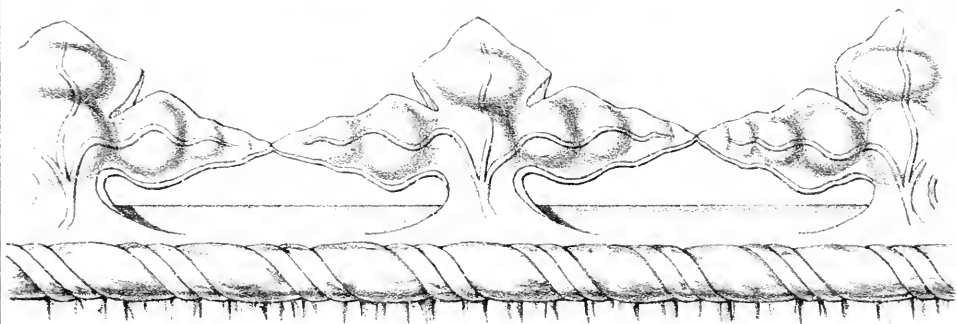
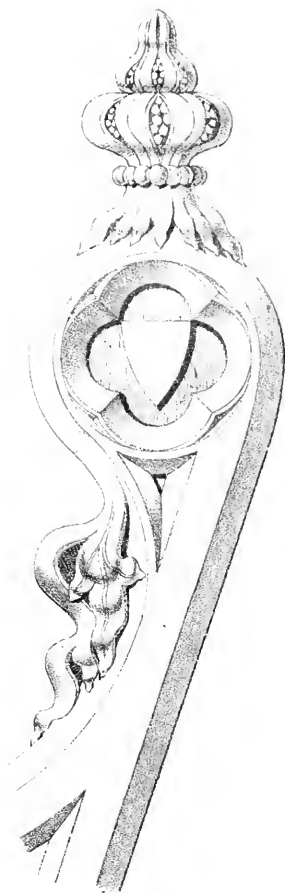
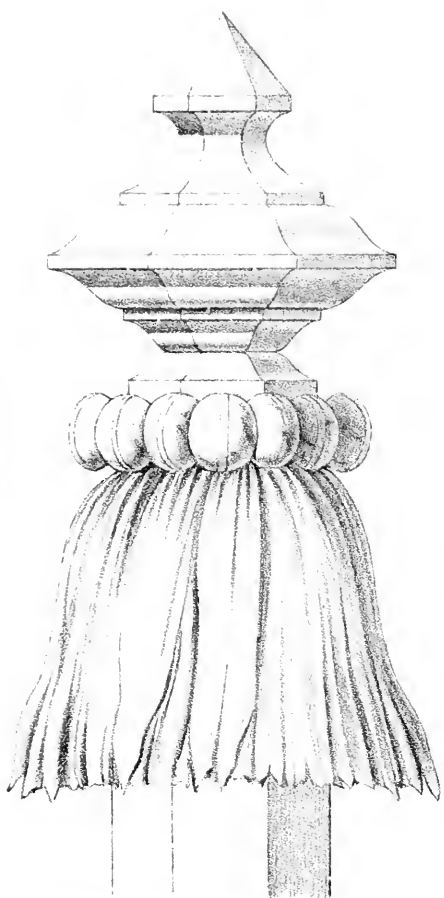
It is to be regretted that the avidity with which worldly men pursue the avocations of life, has become an hinderance to the prosperity of Christian Art. Is there nothing in Christian Architecture that has a tendency to elevate the human mind to higher and nobler trains of thought than are likely to follow from the establishment of heathen principles in the Architecture of streets? Is there nothing pure and desirable in the emblems of the Christian faith, that they should be set aside for the adoption of those which illustrate the principles of heathen Mythology? Are the glories of a people, that lived more than two thousand years since, to remain the admiration and delight of a nation like England? Let us hope that even in the region of Christian Architecture the Reformation will perform its great and important work honourably and effectually. We may then hope to succeed in preparing the genius of this country to shine as a light, both glorious and lasting, in generations yet unborn, ever remembering that high Art is an emblem of peace, and can only flourish when education gives freedom and exercise to the mind. We may then hope, too, that the public mind will learn to appreciate and value all that Nature and Art can combine for the welfare of the human family, and for the promotion of His glory, Whose Name we must honour in all things, that He may exalt our nation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATES.

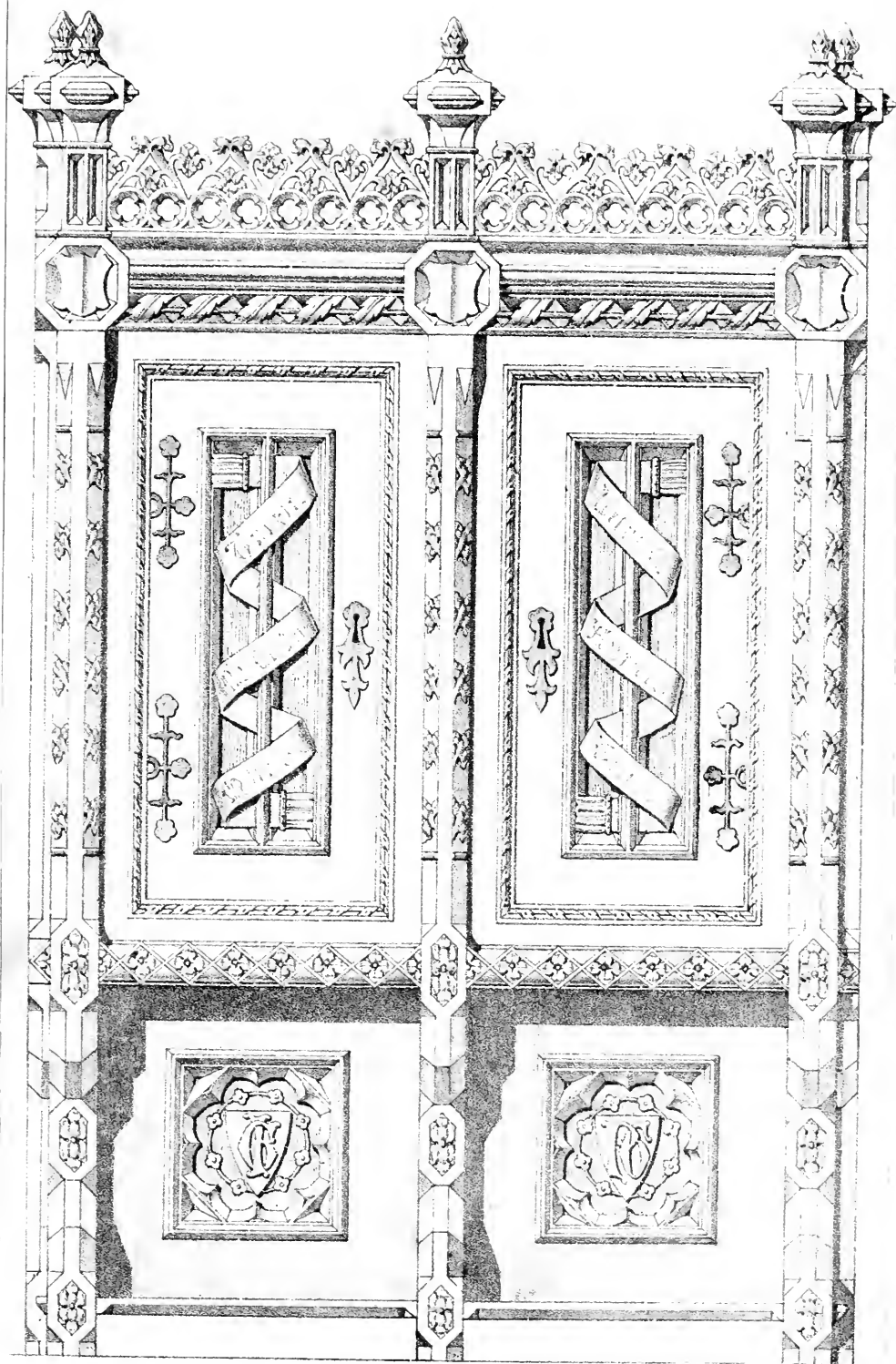
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1. DESIGNS FOR THREE CHAIRS.
 2. DETAILS FOR DITTO.
 3. DESIGN FOR A CABINET.
 4. DESIGN FOR A CABINET AND BOOKCASE.
 5. DESIGNS FOR IRON AND BRASS RAILINGS.
 6. DESIGNS FOR HINGES.
 7. DESIGN FOR A CANDELABRUM.
 8. DESIGNS FOR CHIMNEY PIECES.
 9. DESIGNS FOR ORNAMENTS.
 10. DESIGNS FOR CROCKETS.
 11. EARLY ENGLISH FOLIAGE.
 12. DESIGN FOR A GABLE CROSS.
 13. DESIGNS FOR PANELING AND FOLIAGE.
 14. DESIGN FOR A TABLE.
 15. DESIGNS FOR TWO TABLES.
 16. DESIGN FOR A BOOKCASE.
 17. DESIGN FOR A SIDE TABLE.
 18. DETAILS TO PLATE 16.
 19. DETAILS TO DITTO.
 20. DESIGNS FOR ENRICHED PANELING.
 21. DESIGNS FOR TWO CROCKETS.
 22. DESIGN FOR A SPANDREL AND CROCKET.
 23. DESIGNS FOR CUSPS.
 24. ENRICHED TERMINATION FOR A CORNICE.
 25. ENRICHED DITTO. DITTO.
 26. DESIGNS FOR ORNAMENTS.

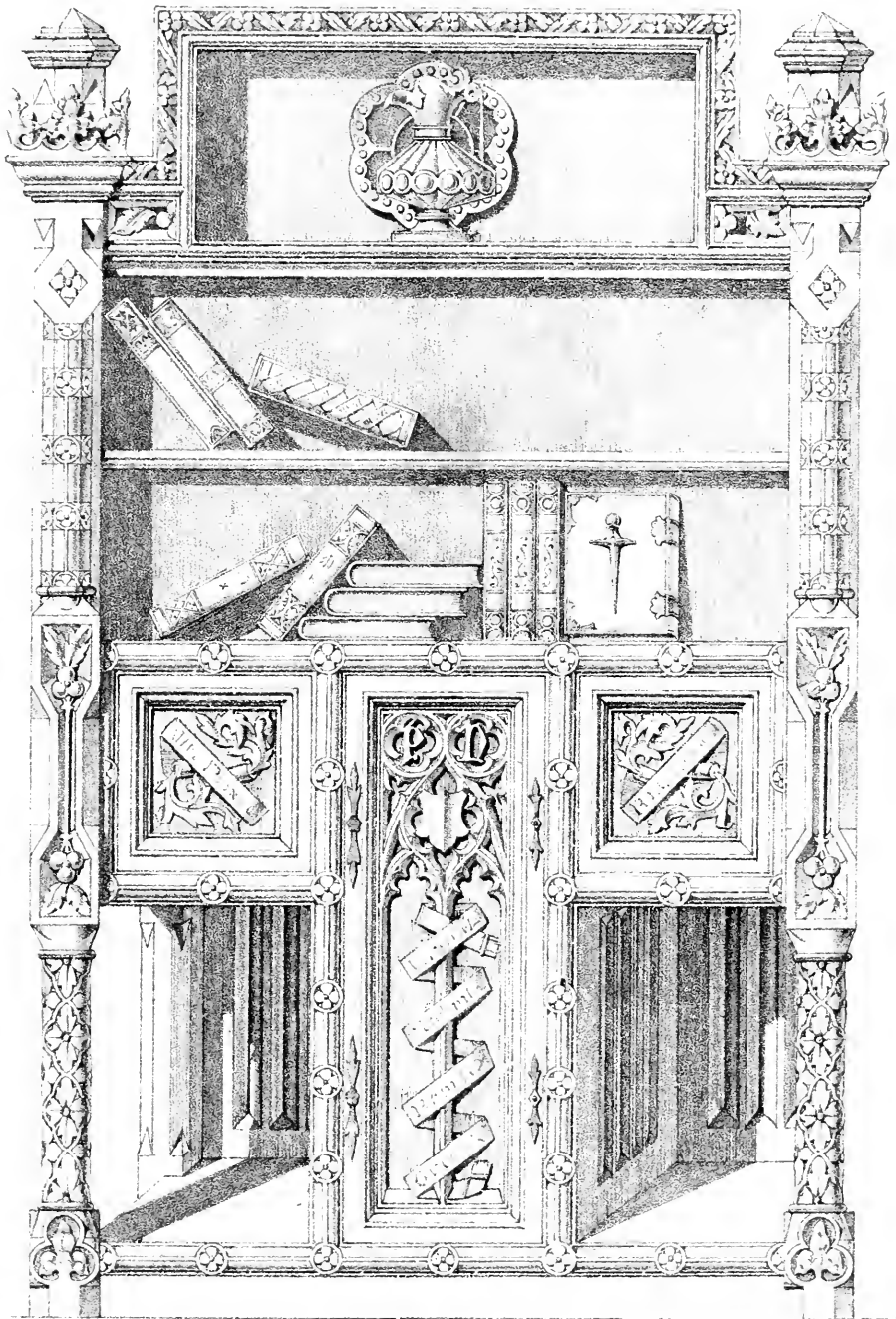
27. DECORATED PANELING.
28. DESIGNS FOR CIRCULAR WINDOWS.
29. DESIGN FOR A CROCKET.
30. DESIGN FOR DITTO.
31. DESIGN FOR DITTO.
32. DECORATED PANELING.
33. DESIGNS FOR MONOGRAMS.
34. DESIGN FOR A PROCESSIONAL BANNER.
35. SPIRAL TERMINATIONS — METAL.
36. DESIGN FOR A KNOCKER.
37. DESIGN FOR DITTO.
38. DESIGN FOR IRON GRATING TO DOOR.
39. DECORATED ORNAMENTS.
40. NORMAN ORNAMENTS.
41. DESIGN FOR AN ALMS-BOX.
42. GABLE-HEADED WINDOW.
43. DOORWAY AND WINDOW.
44. DETAILS FOR WOOD WORK.
45. DETAILS FOR DITTO.
46. DETAILS FOR DITTO.
47. NORMAN RAILING AND FOLIAGE.
48. VARIOUS EMBLEMS.

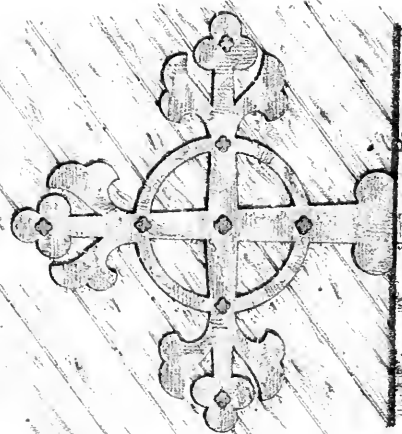
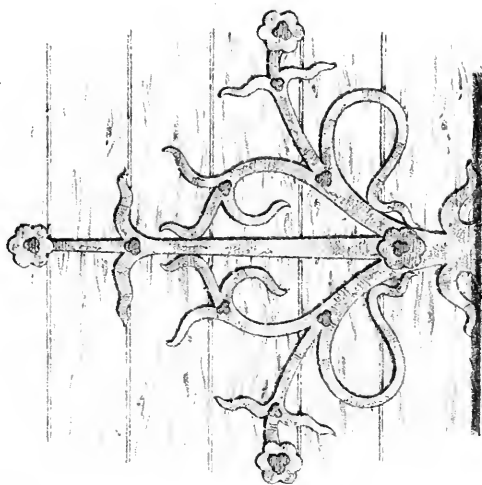
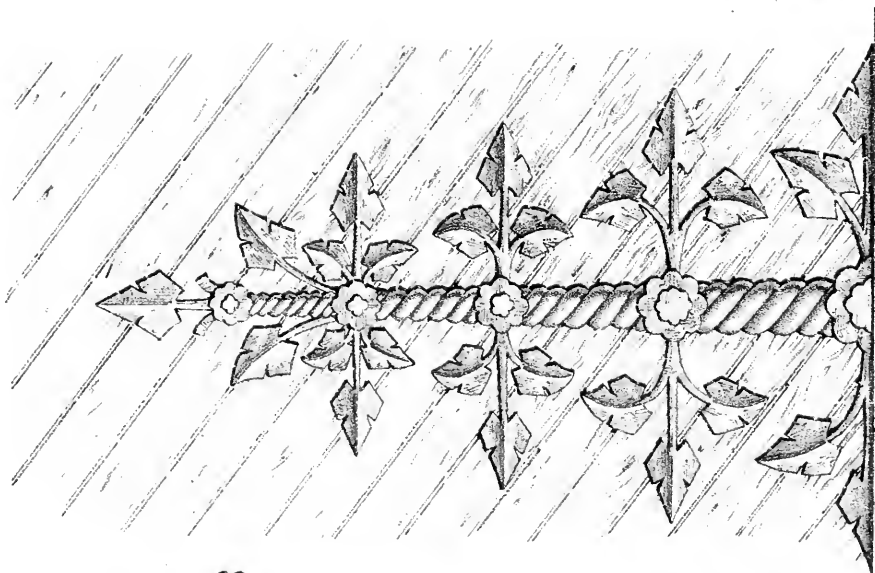
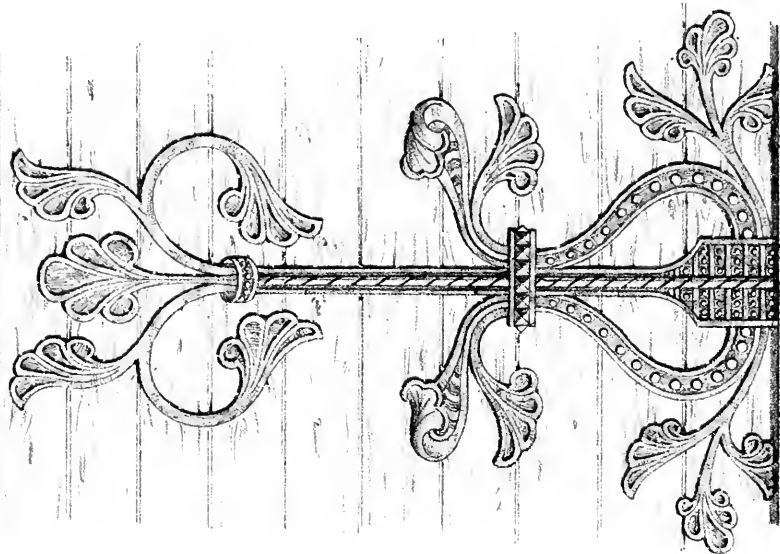


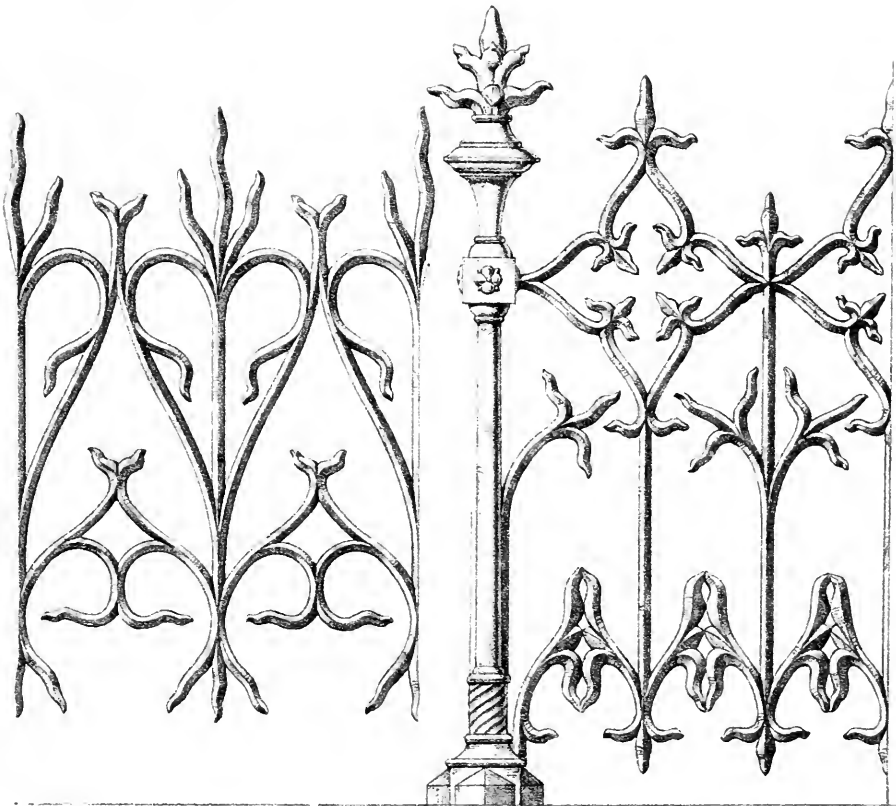
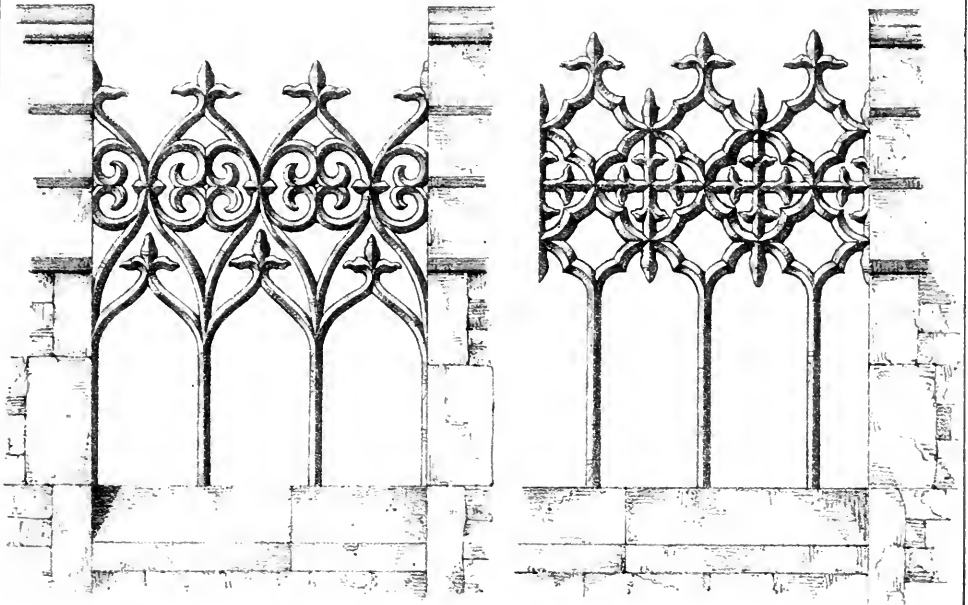




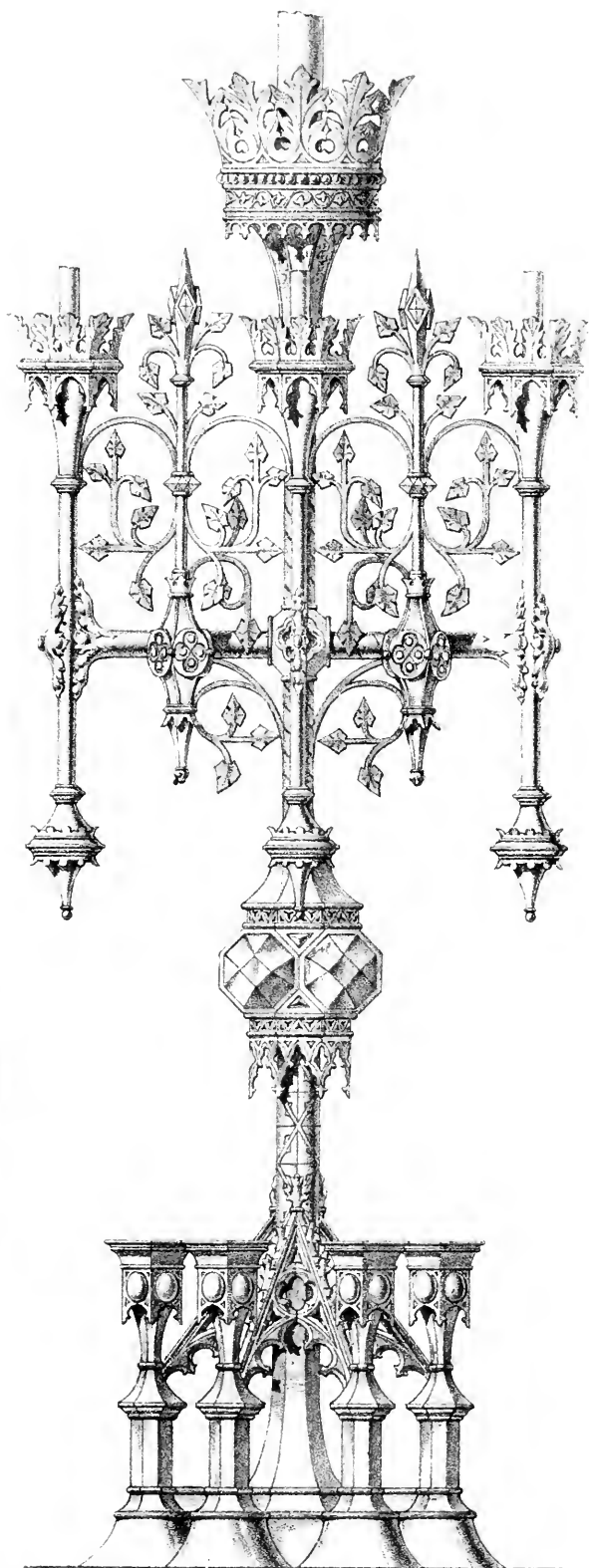


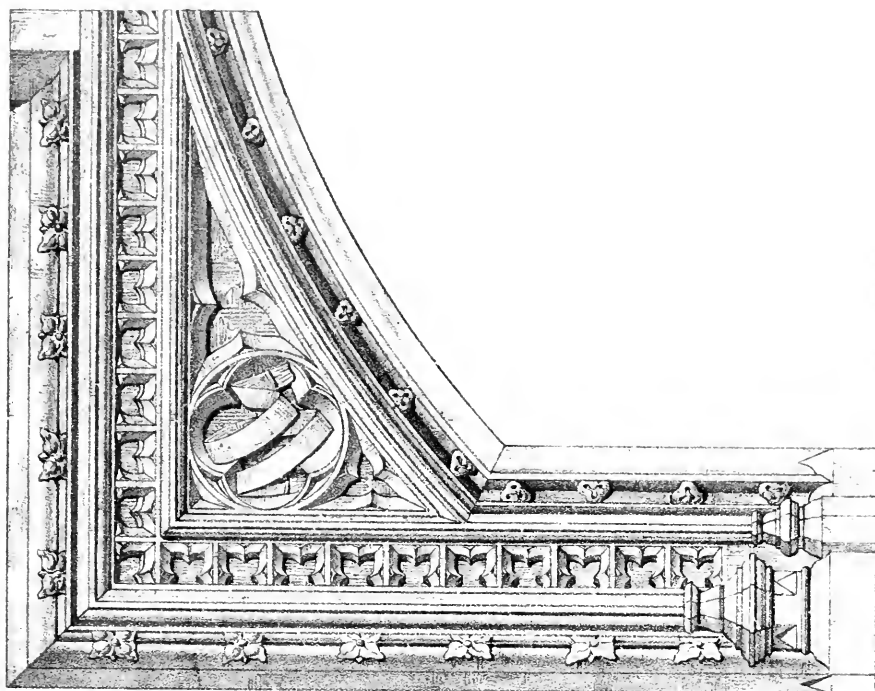




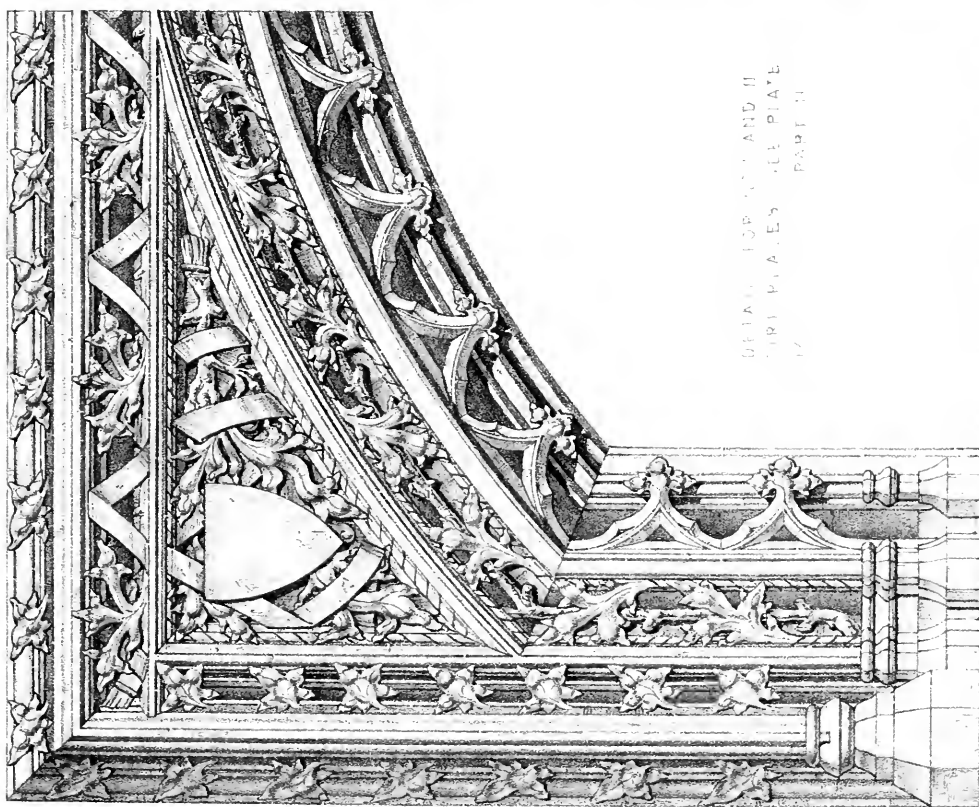


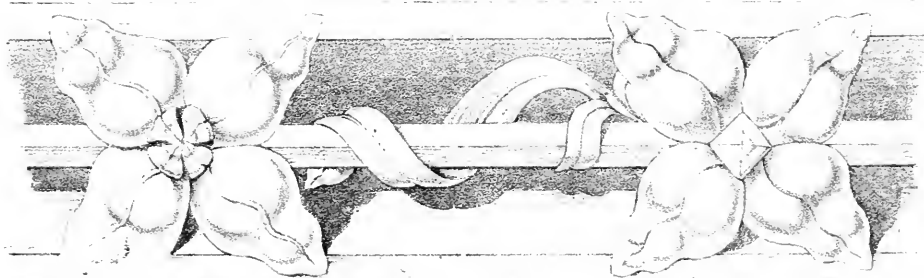
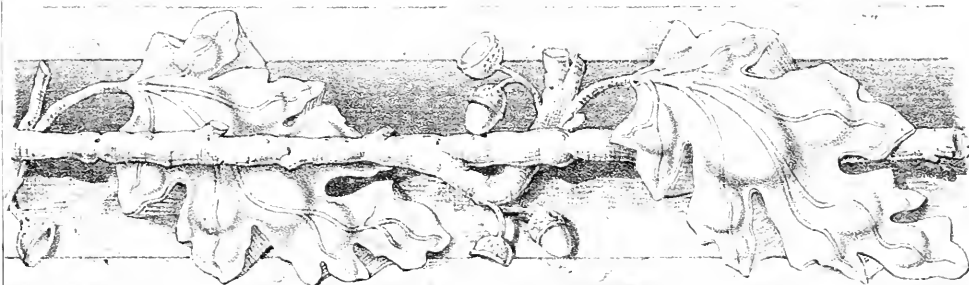
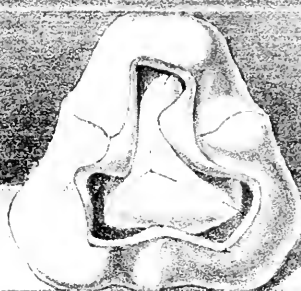
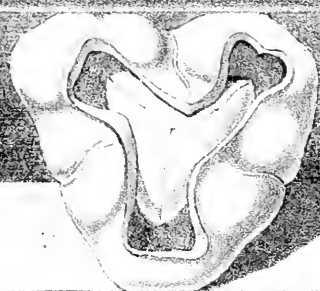


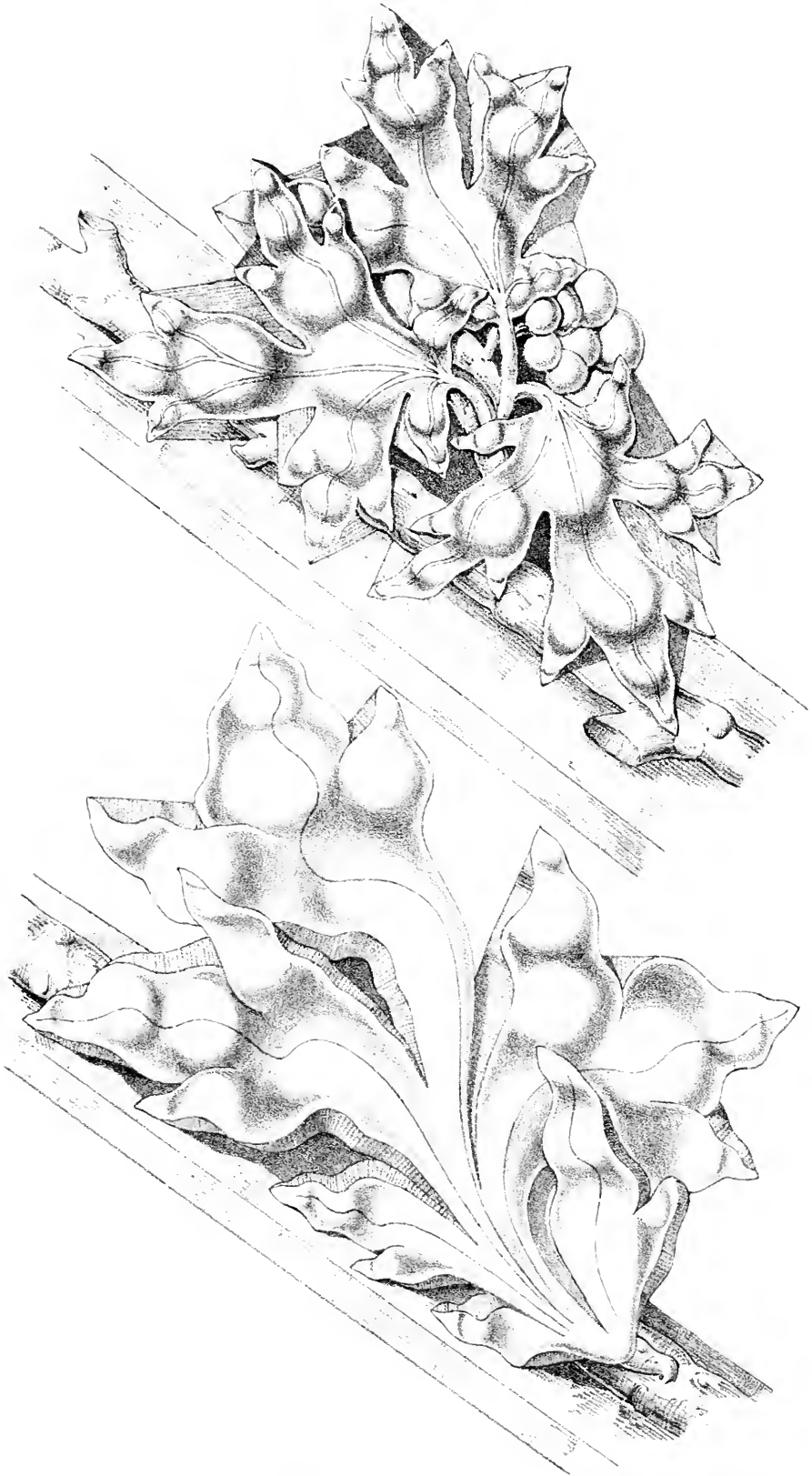




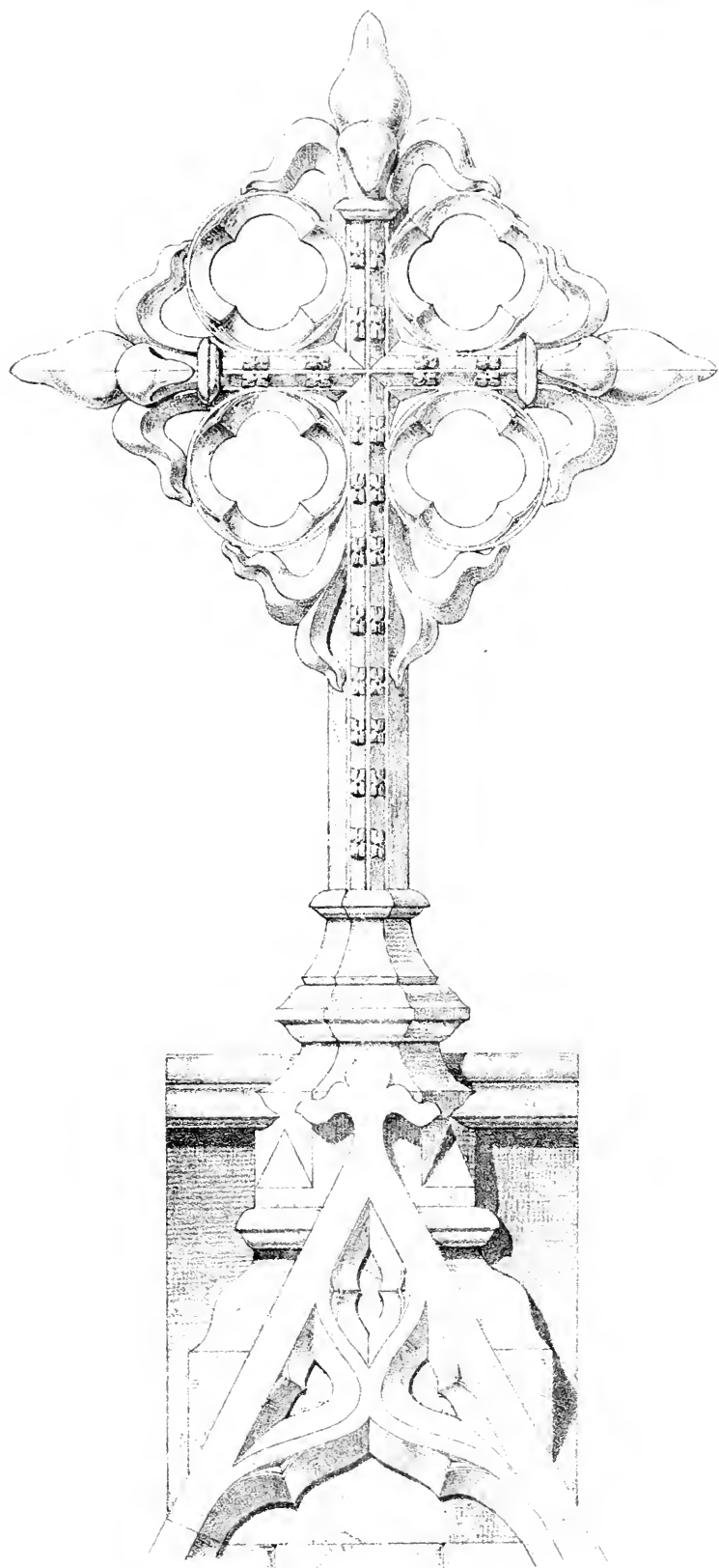
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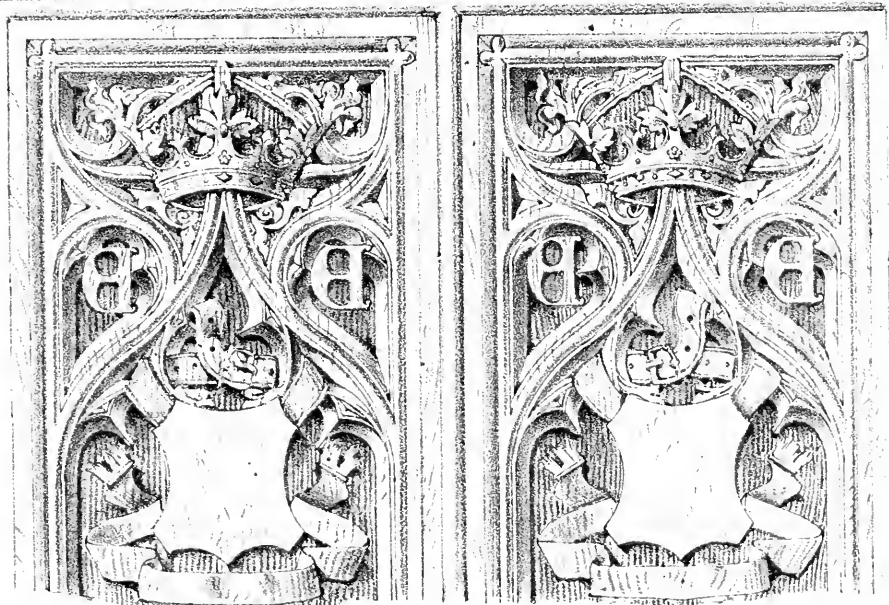
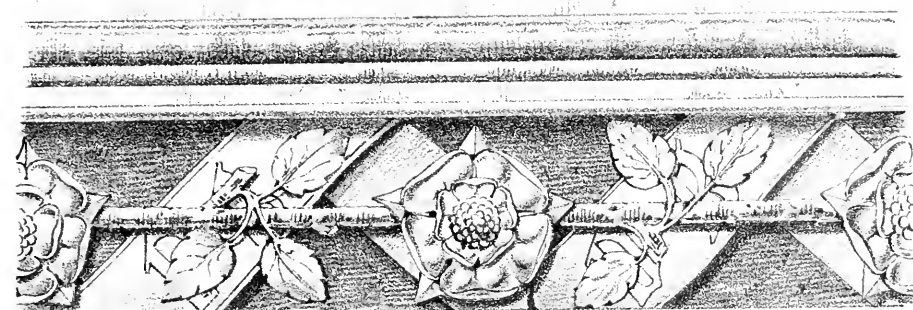
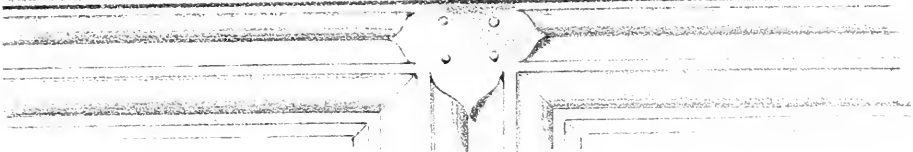
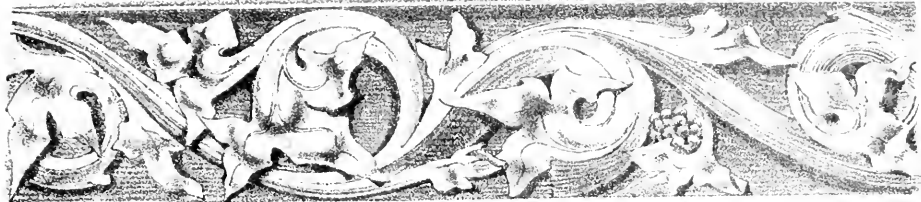


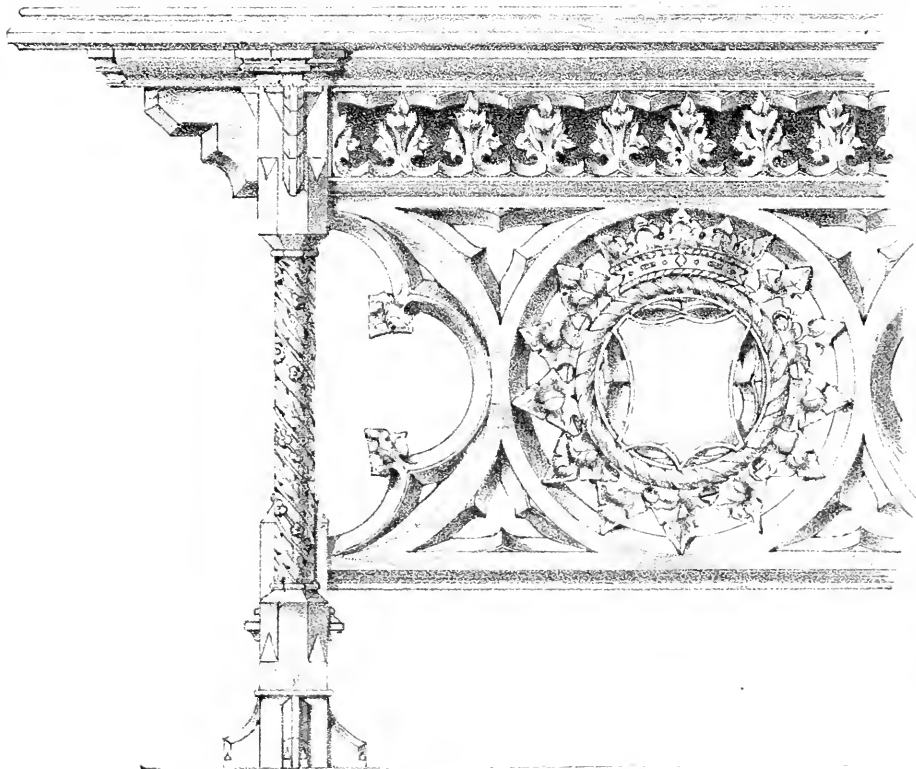
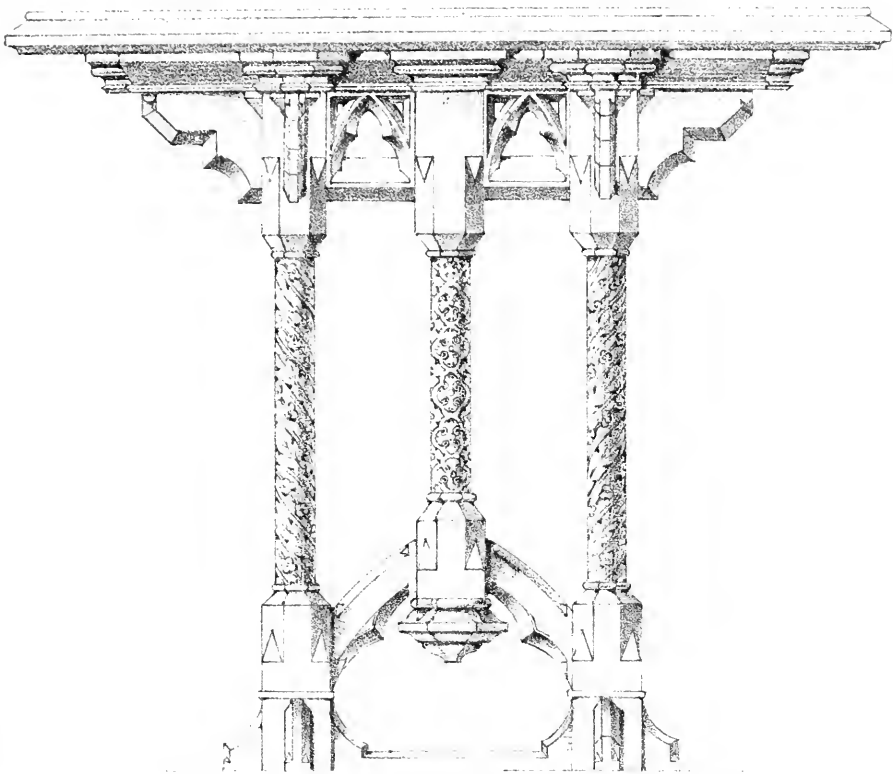


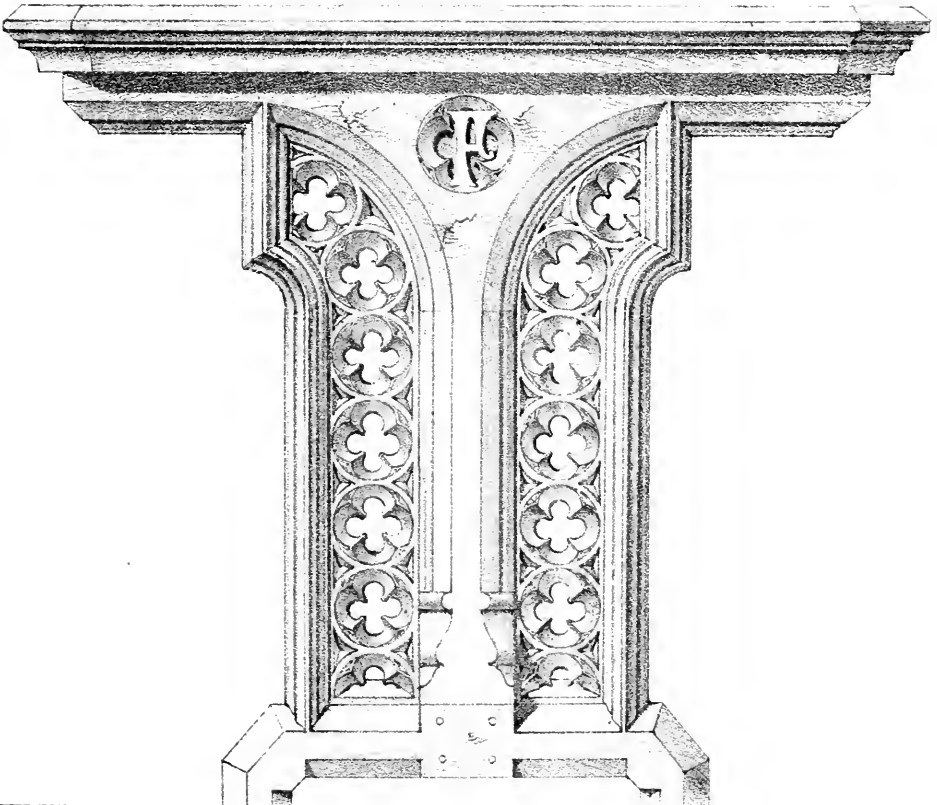
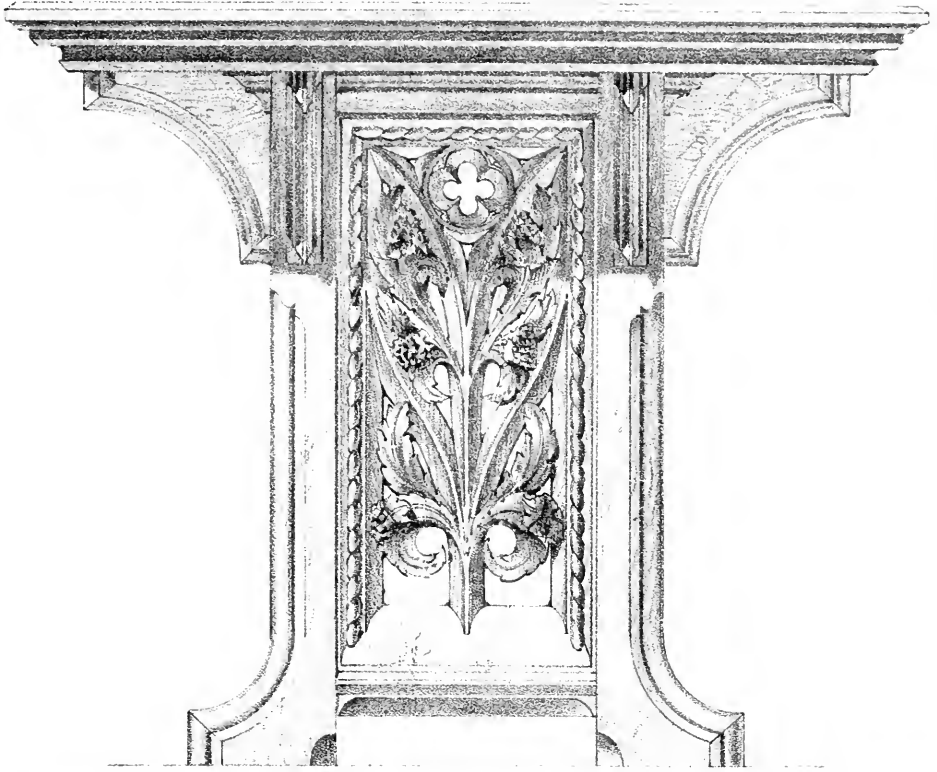


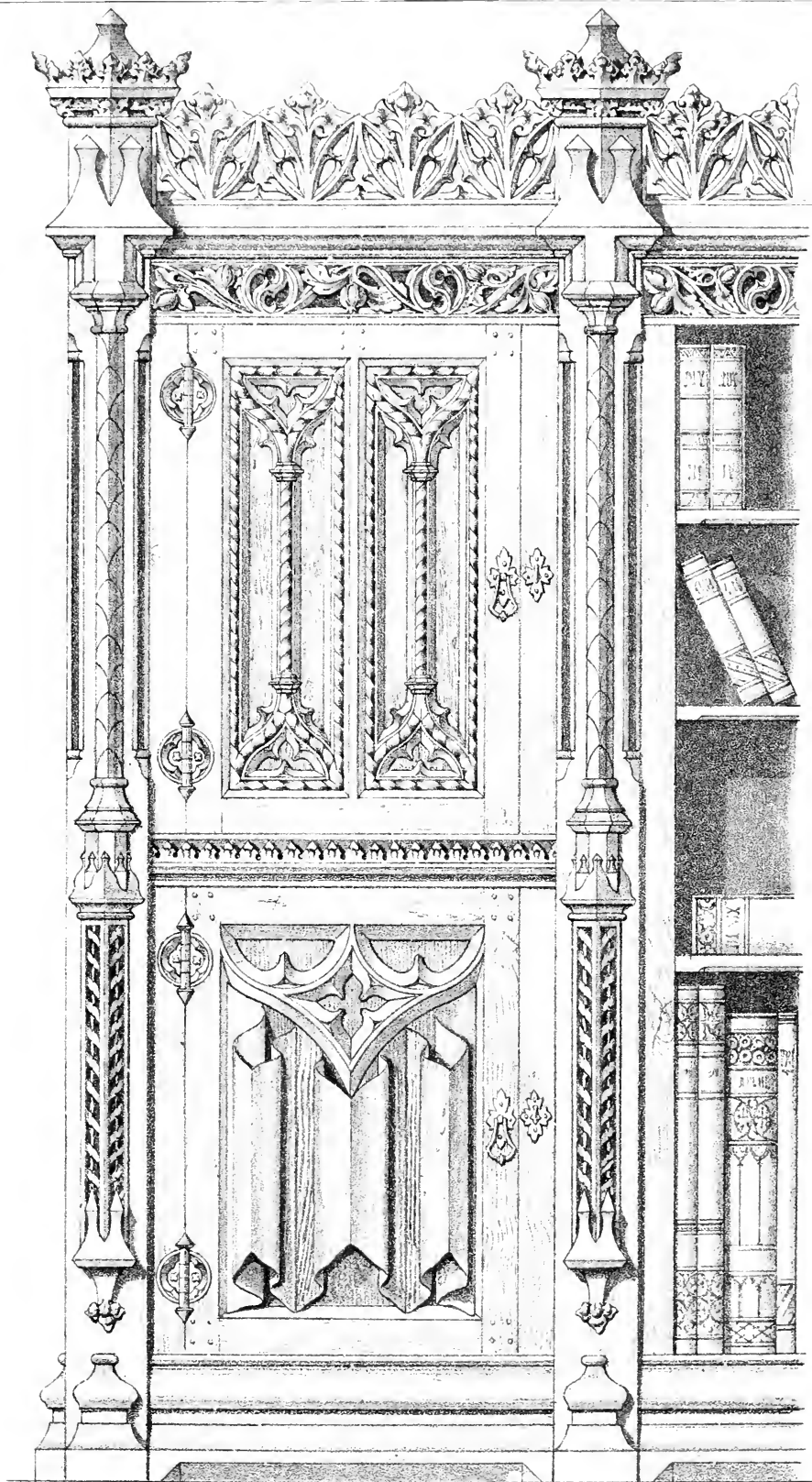


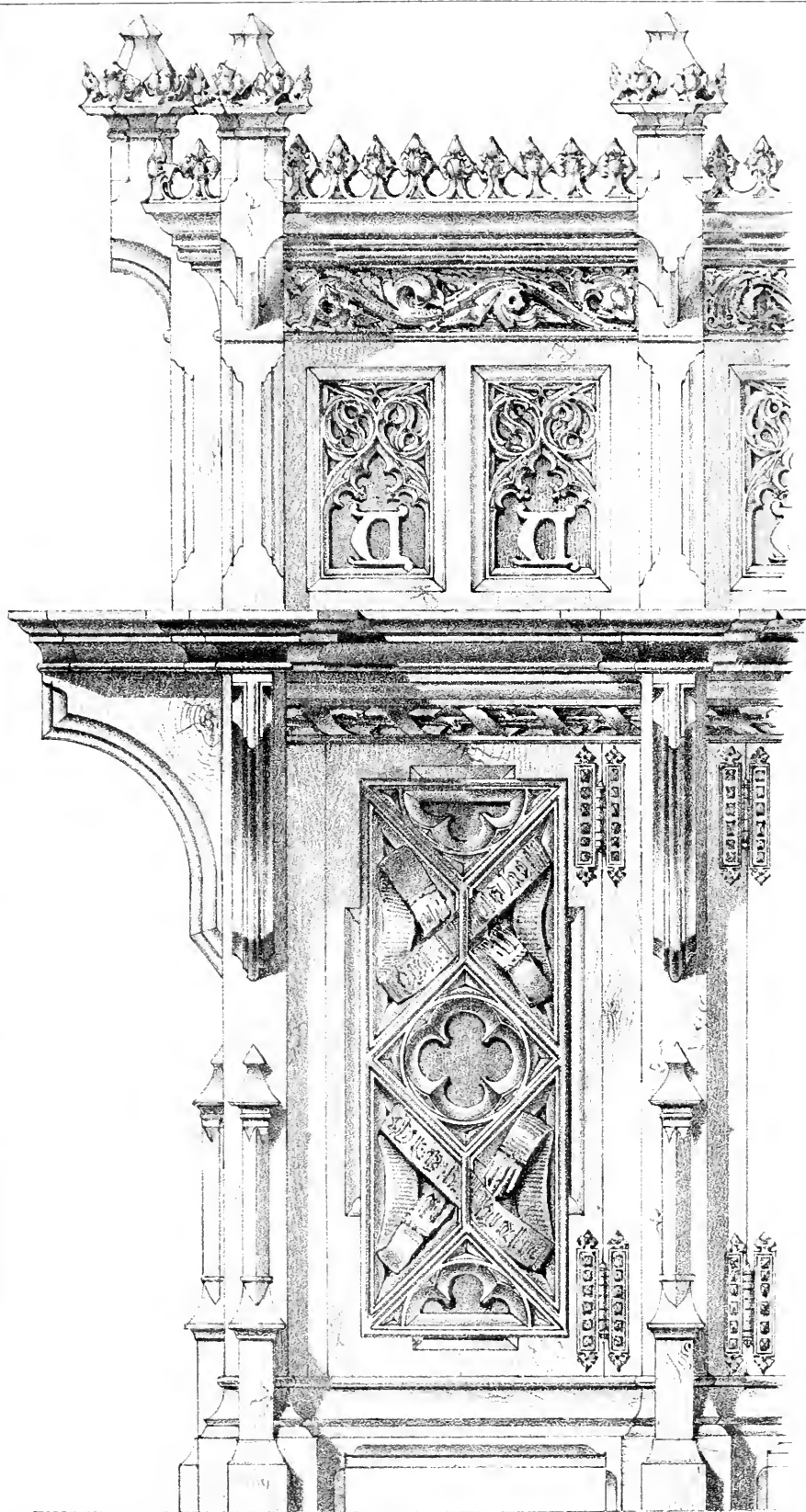


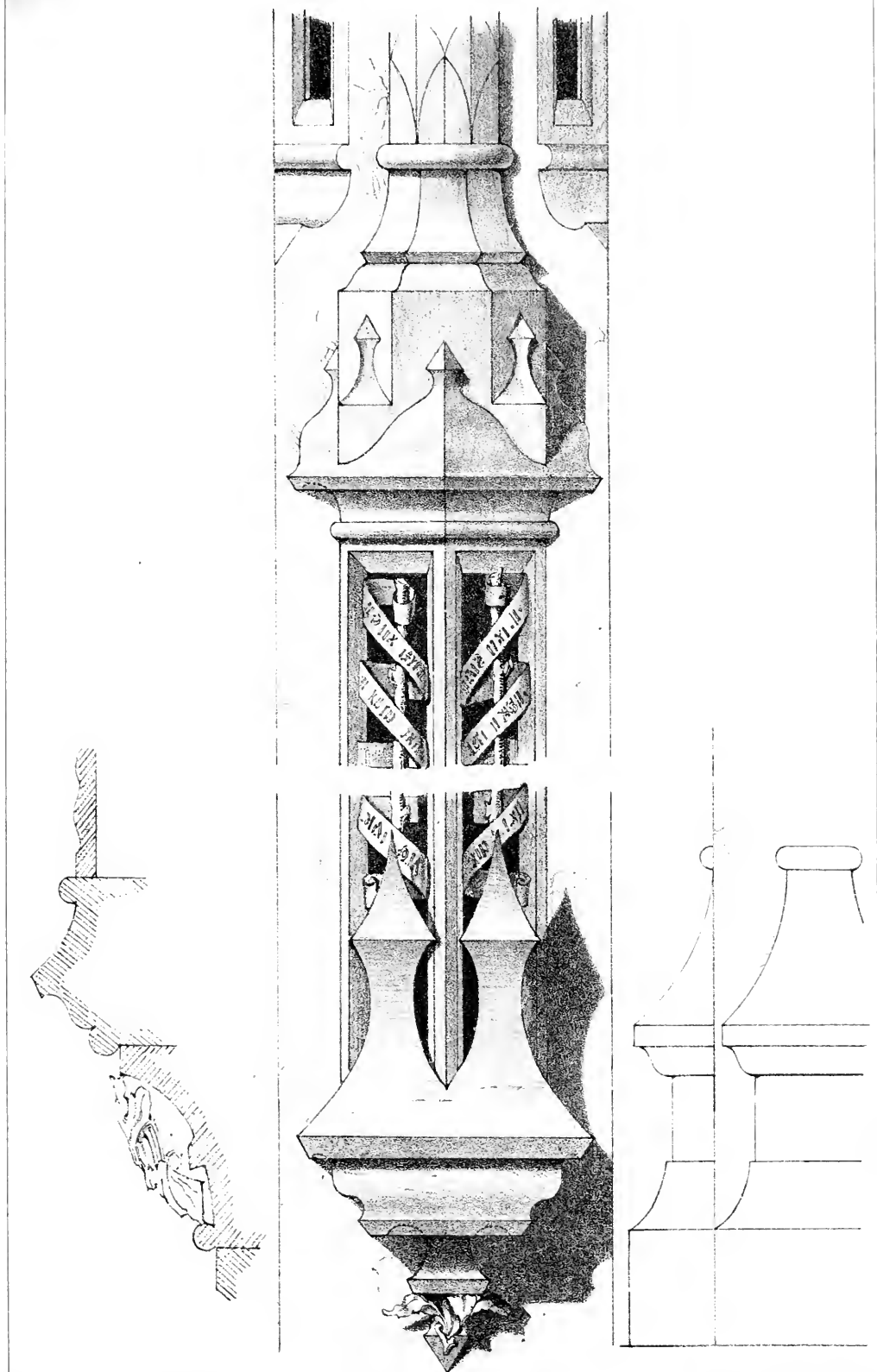


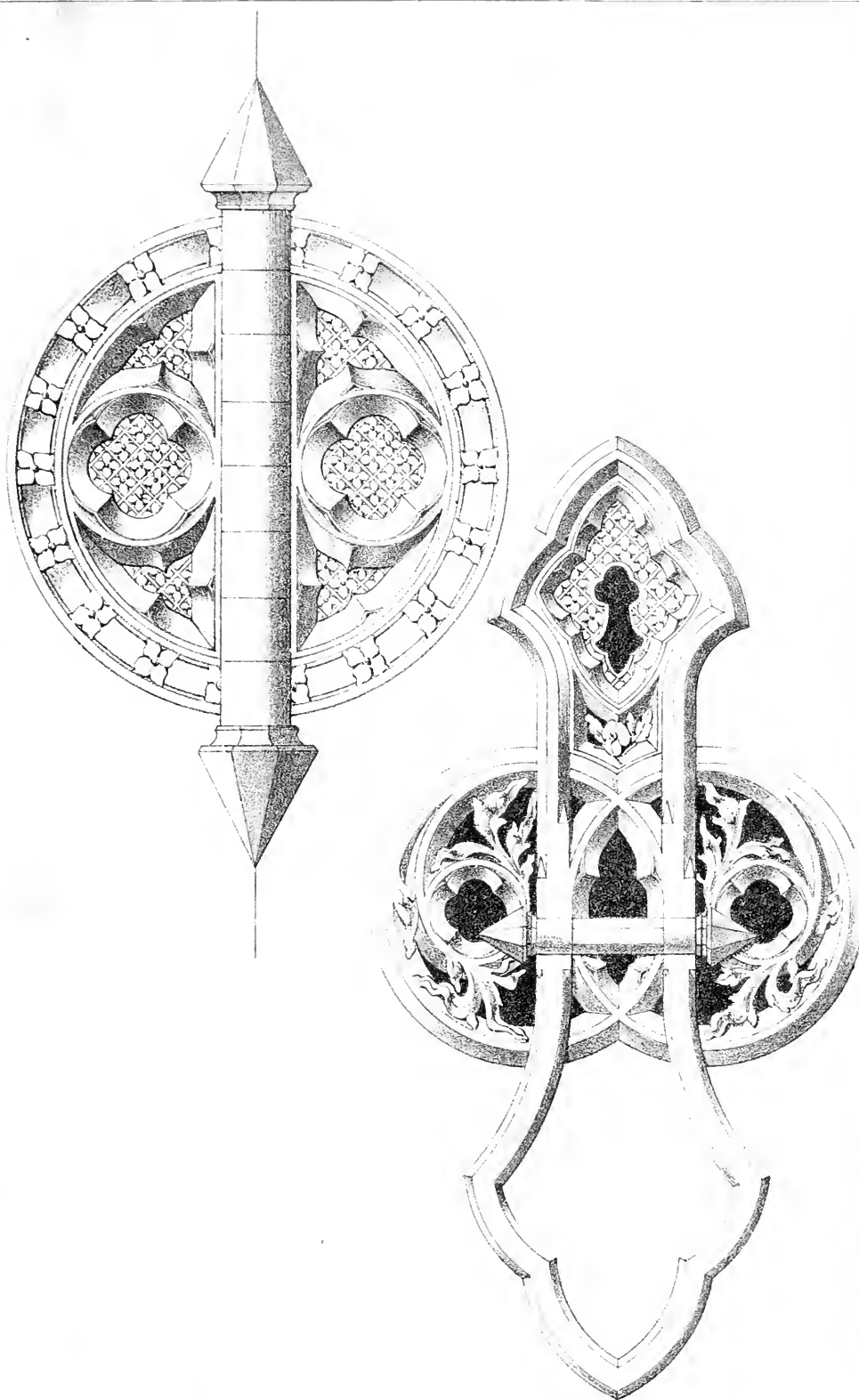


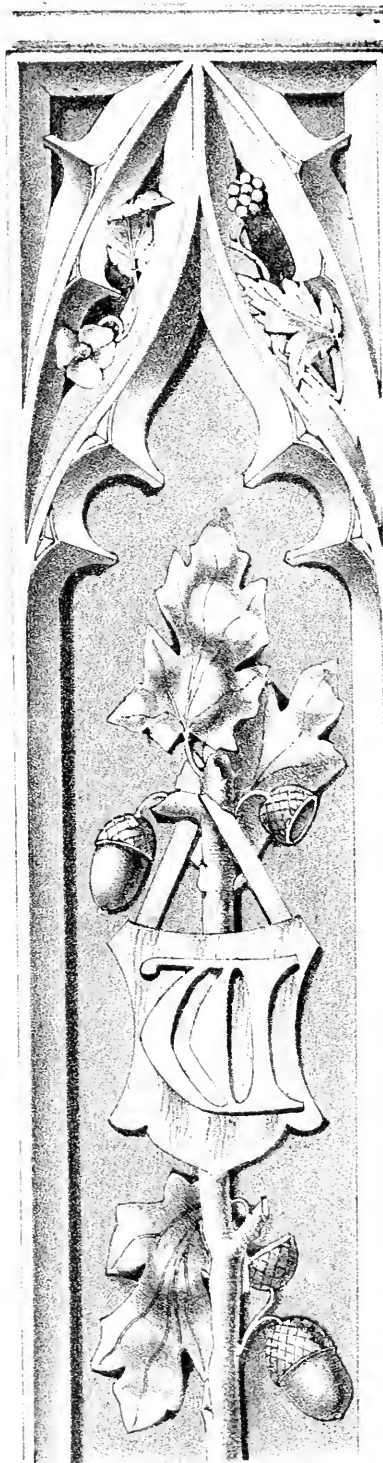
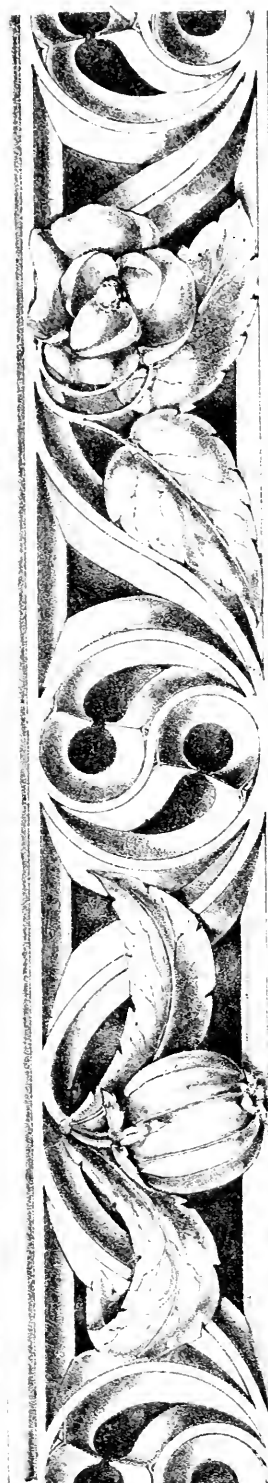


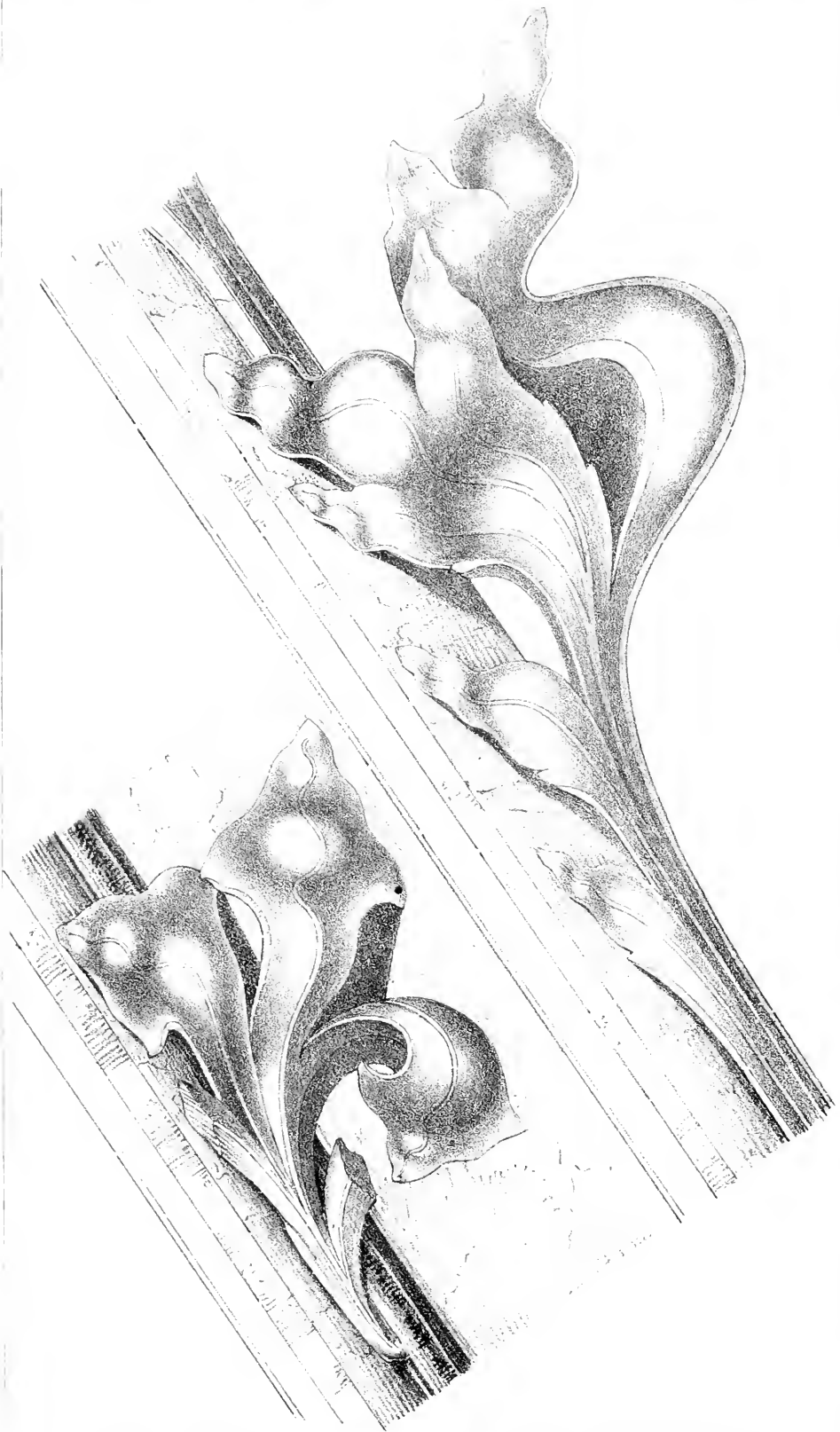


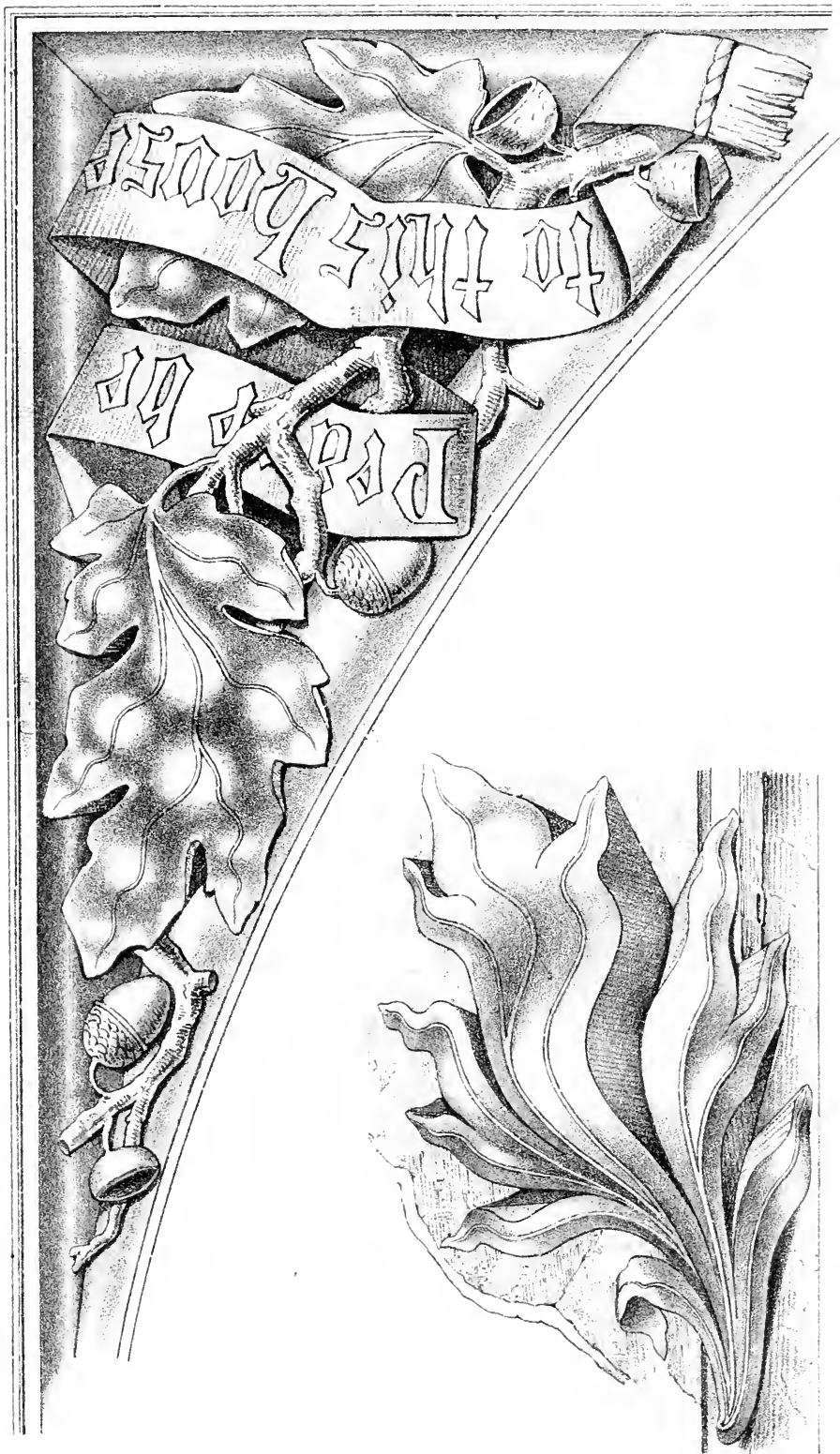


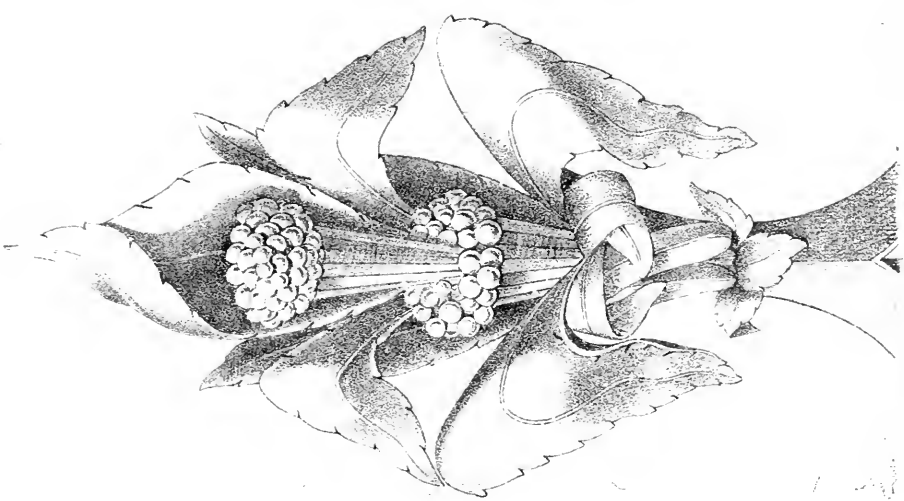
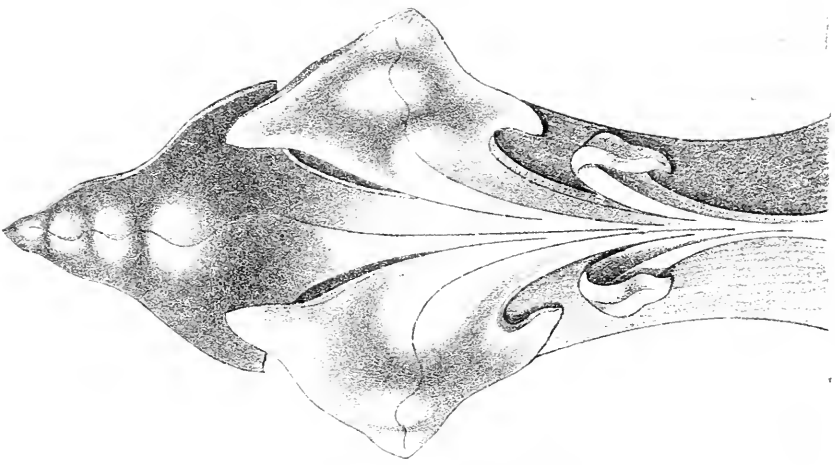
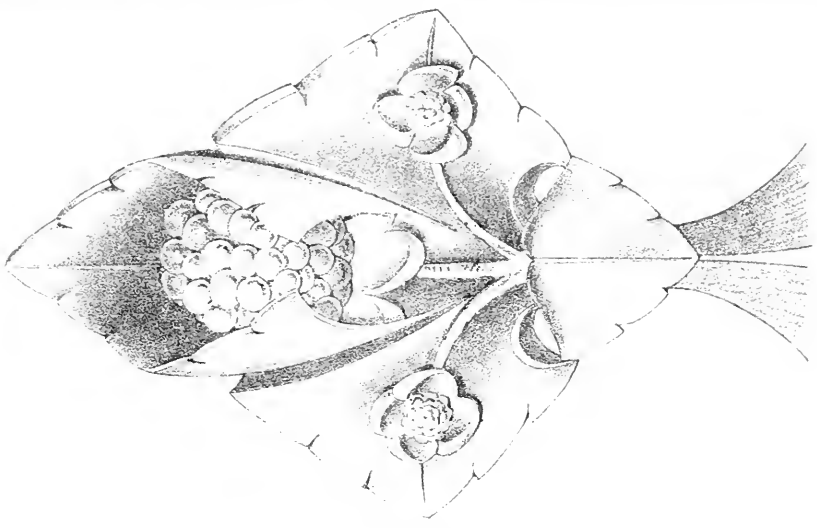


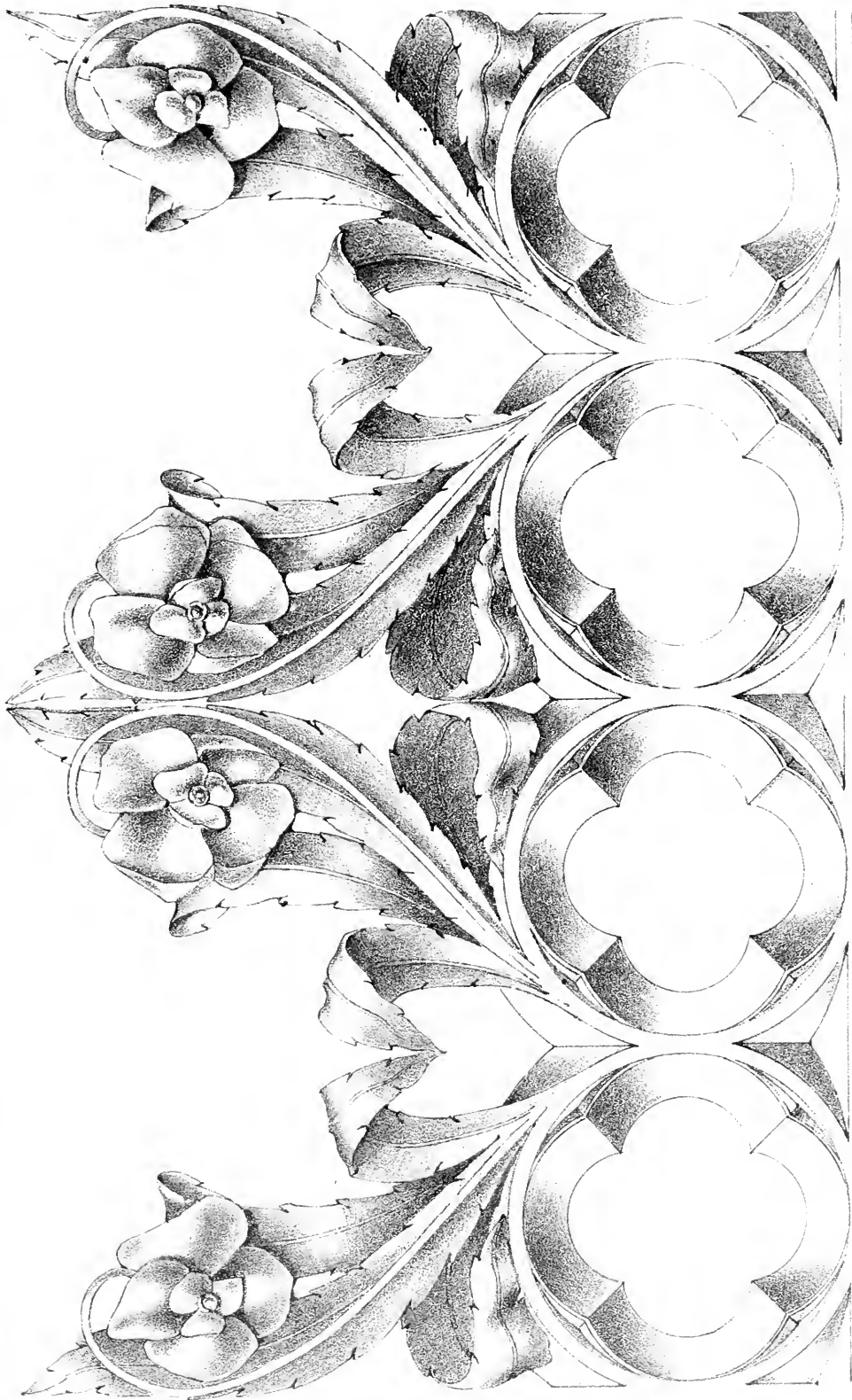


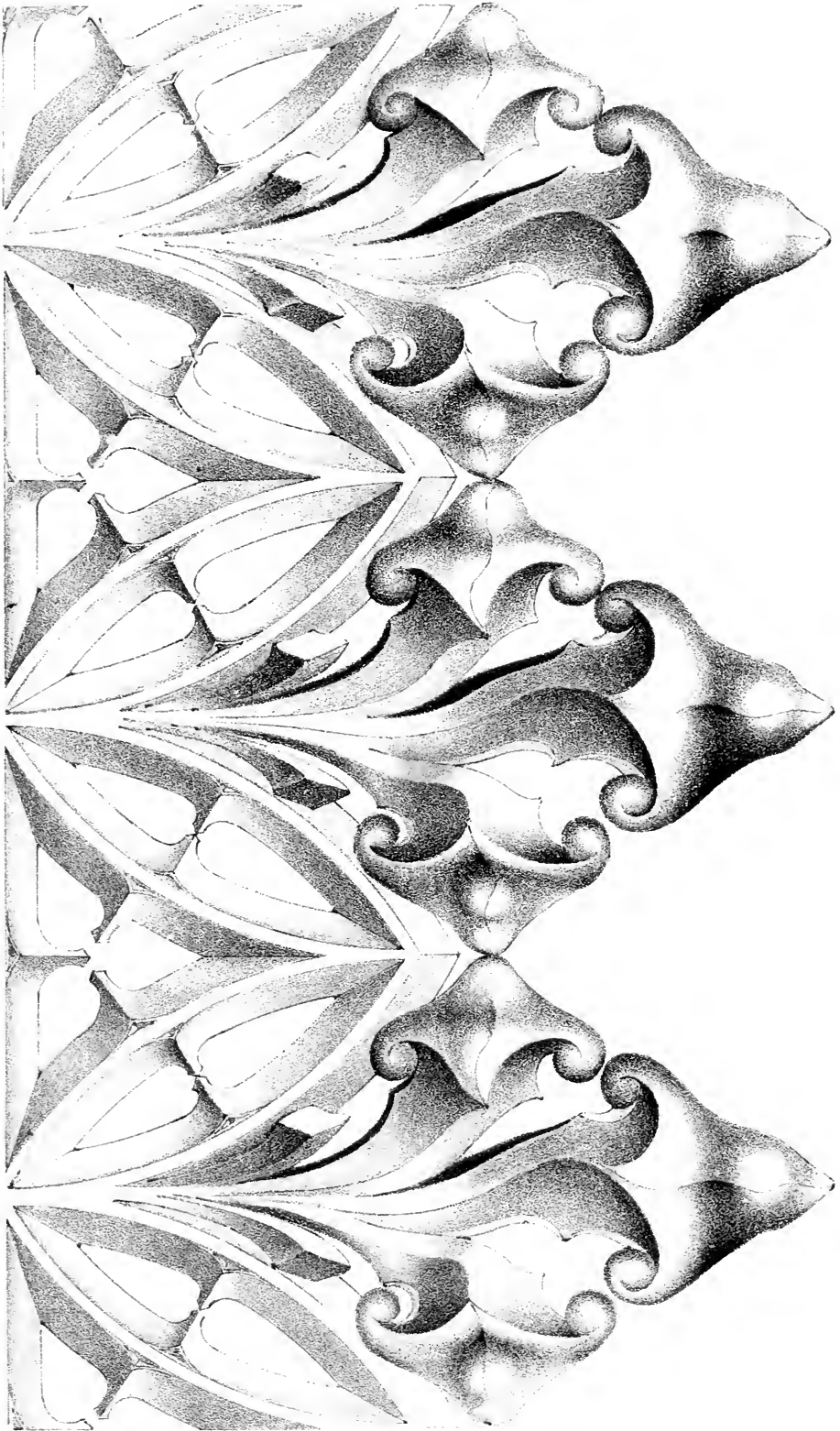


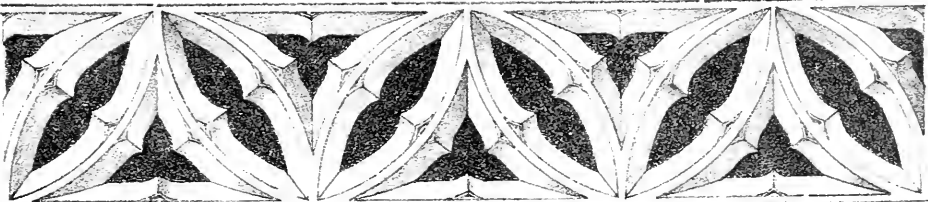
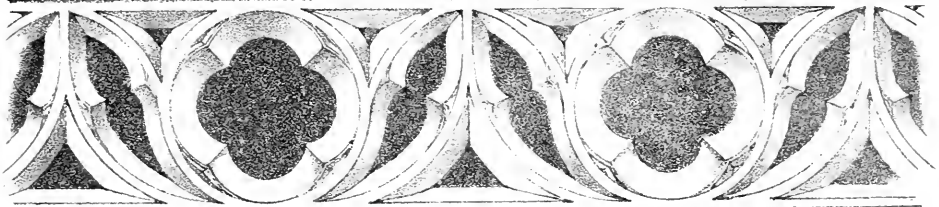
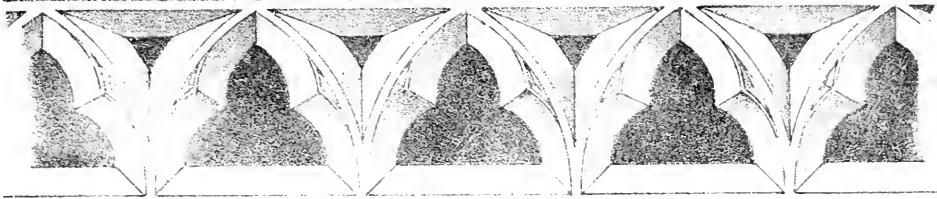
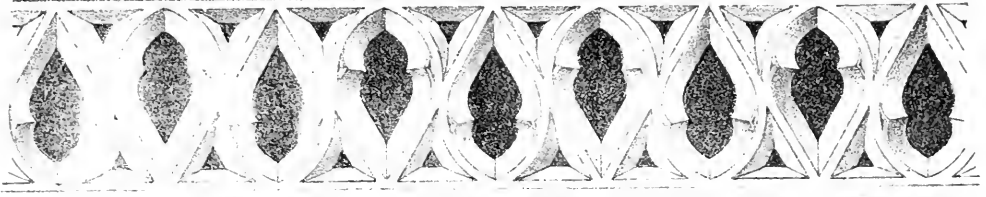


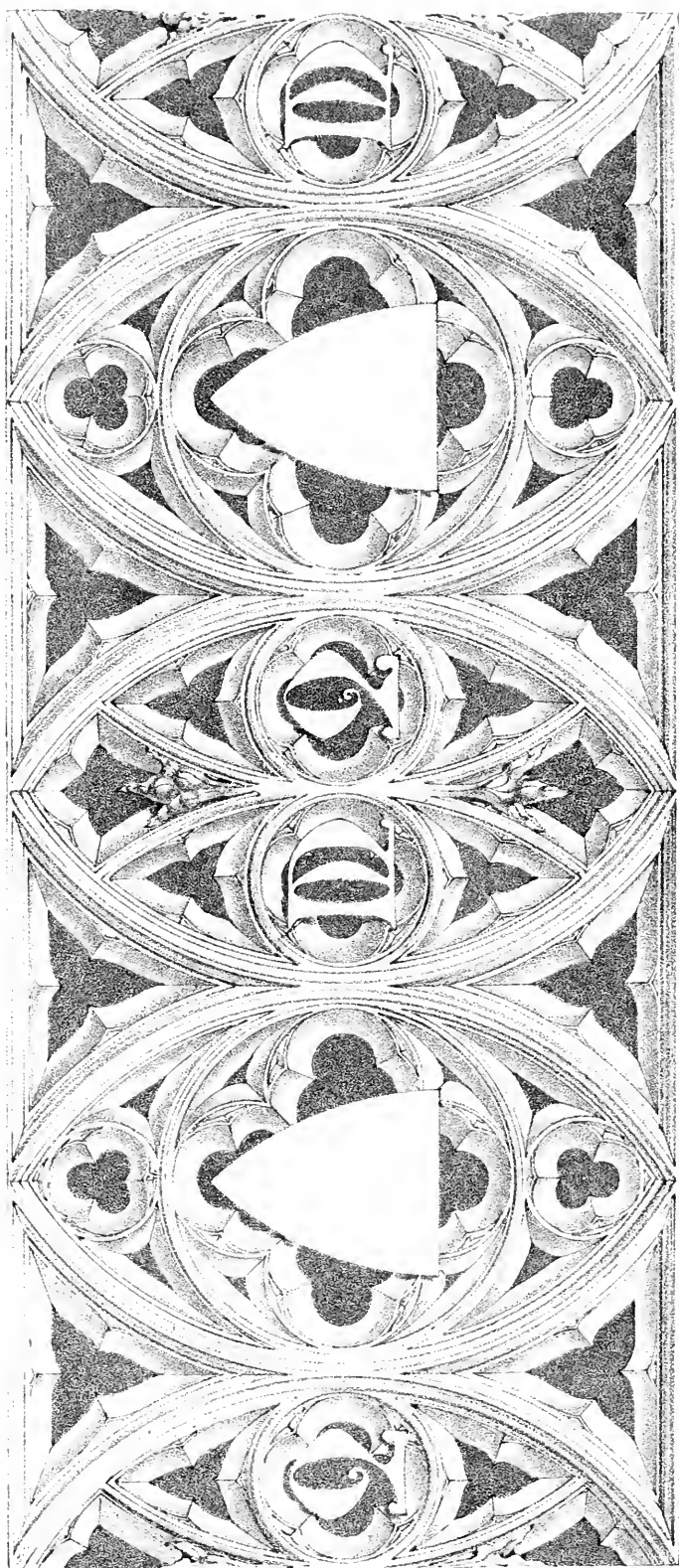


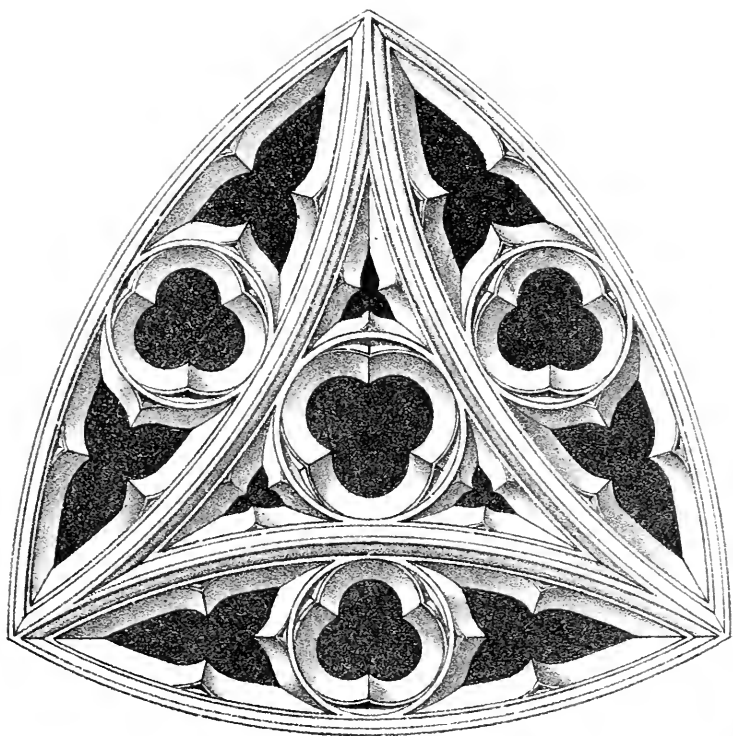
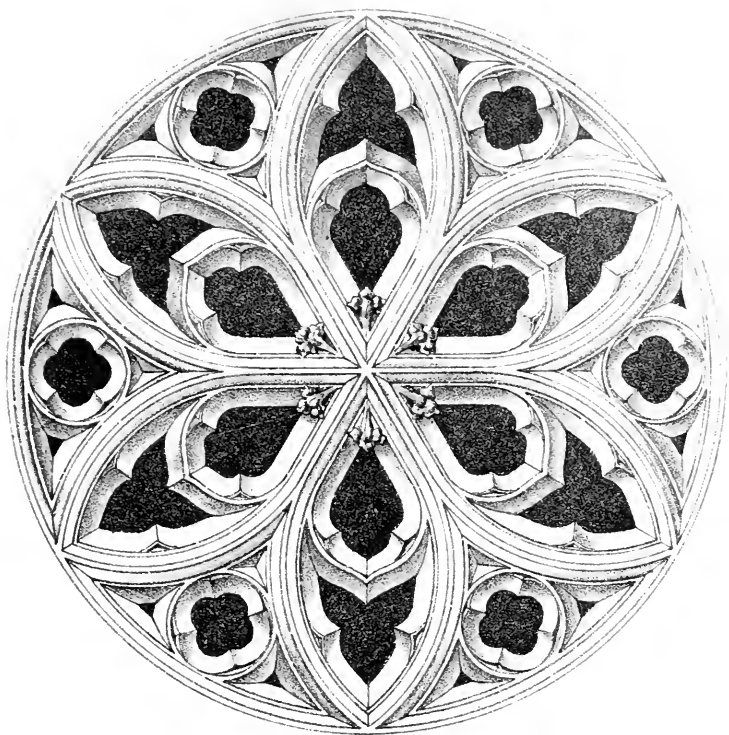


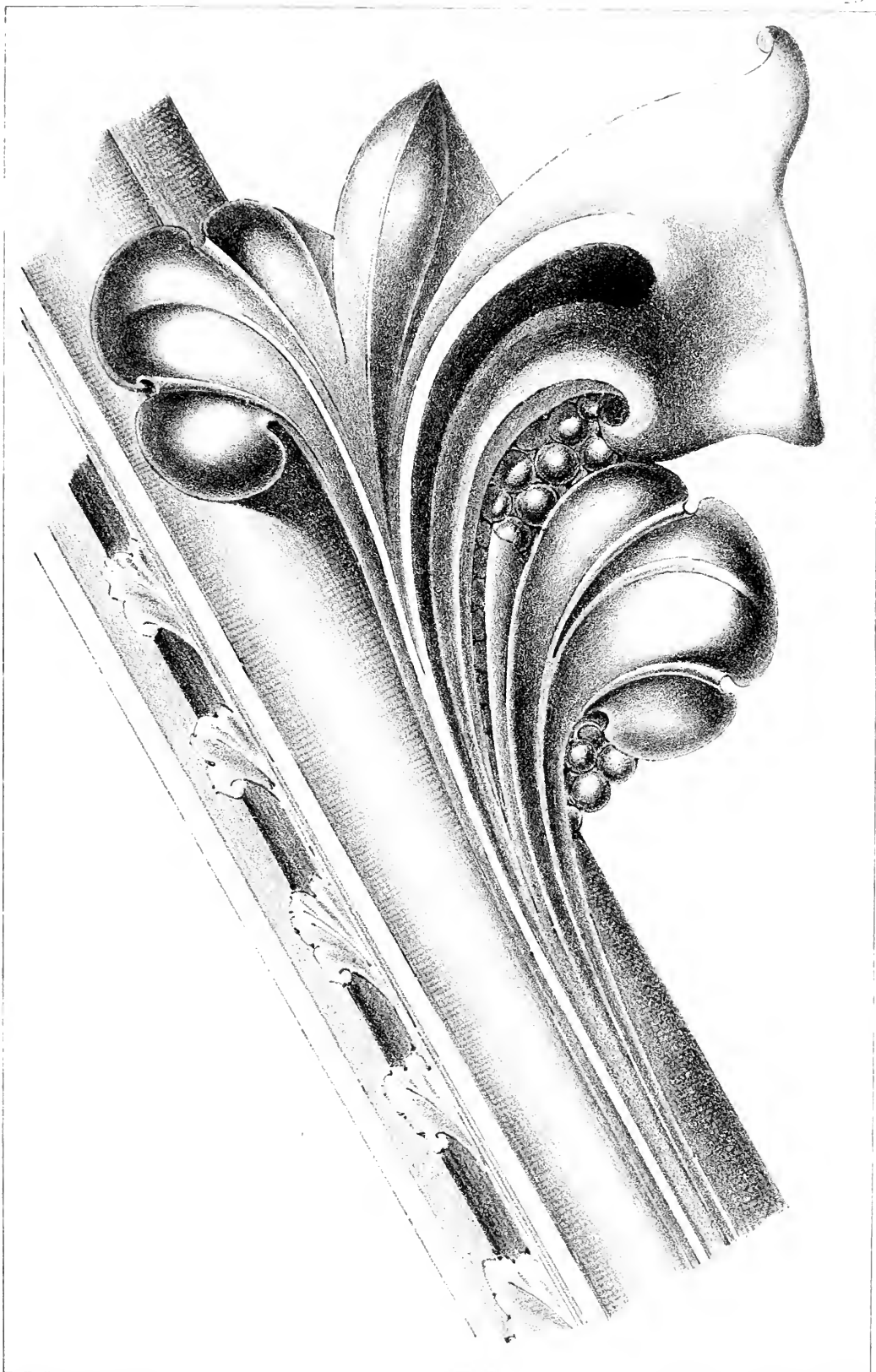


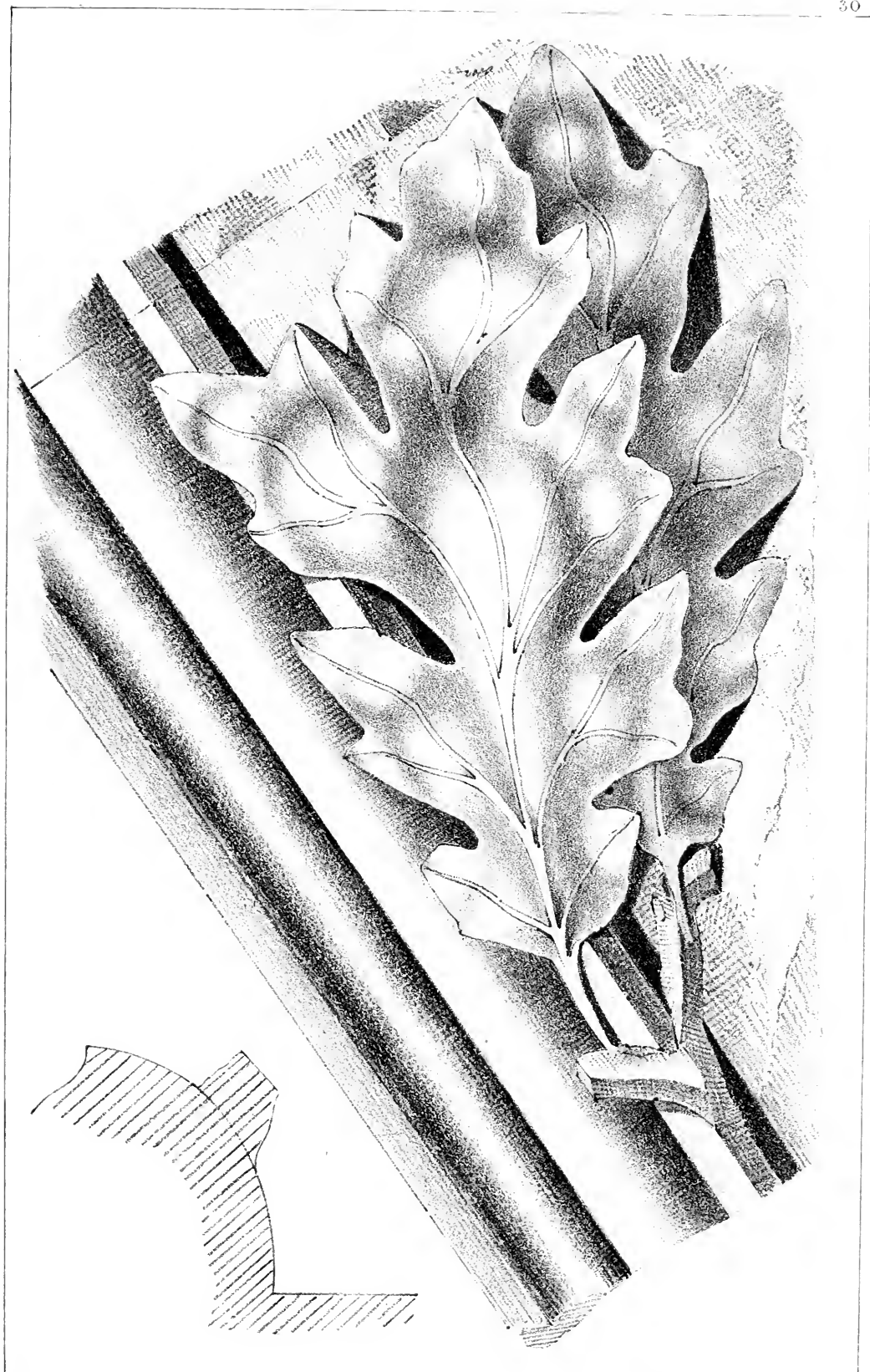




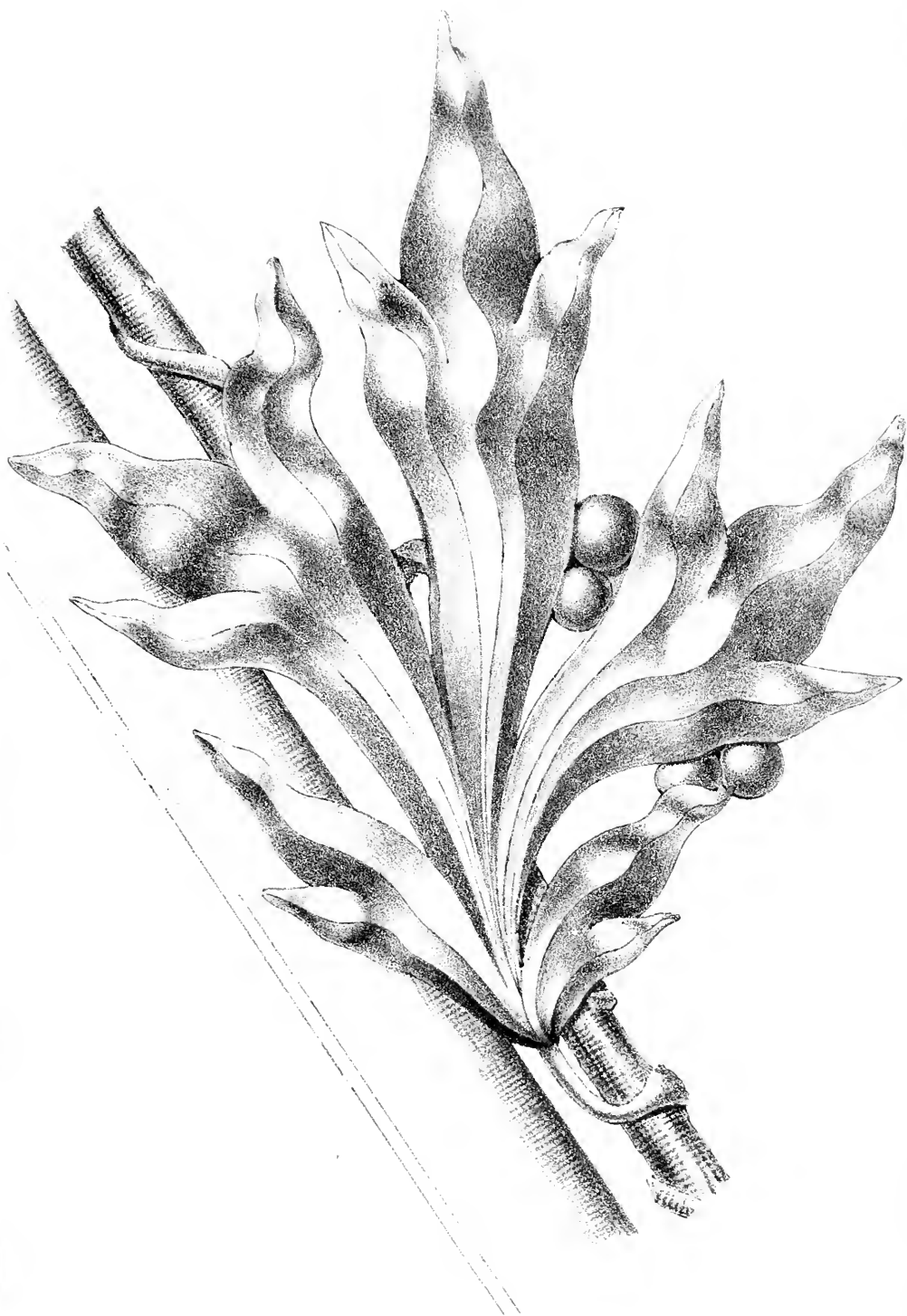


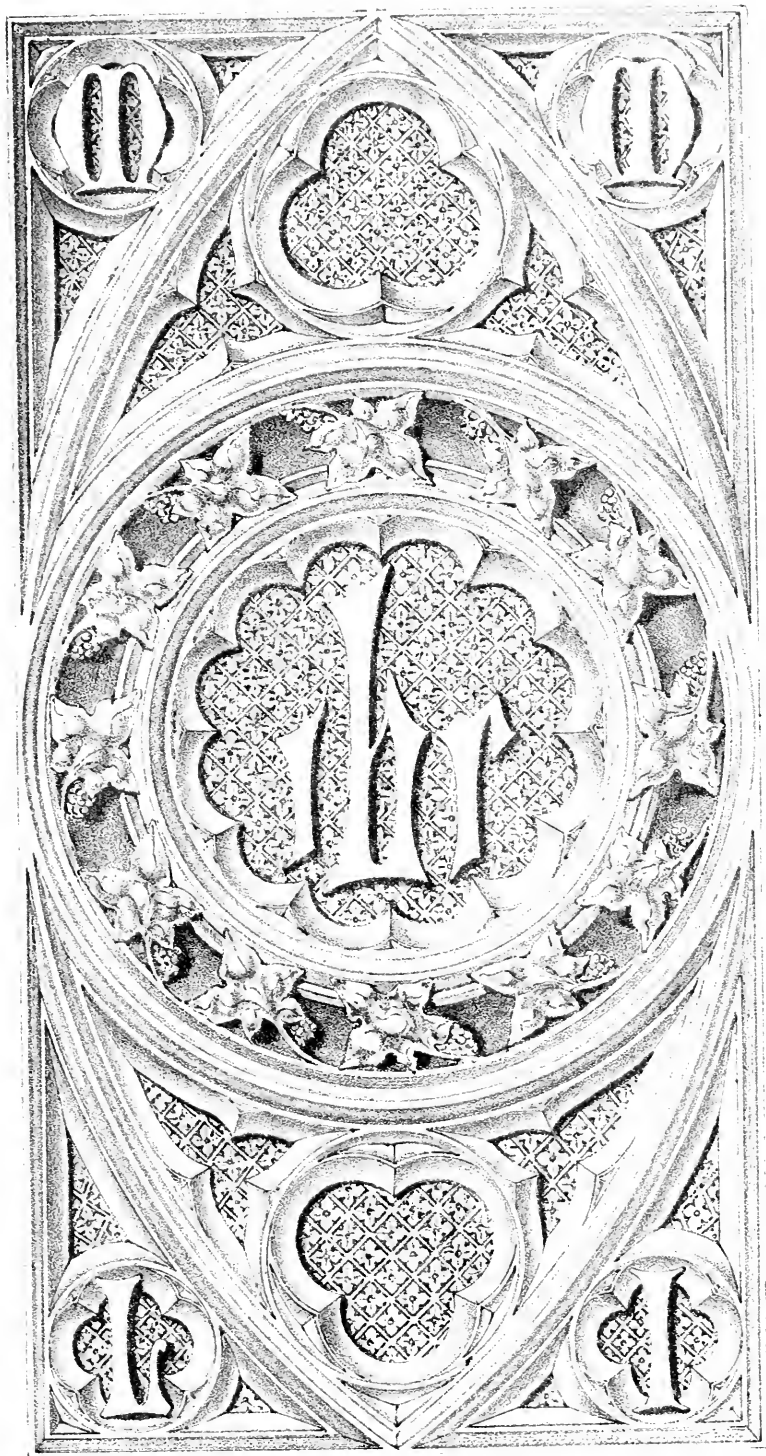


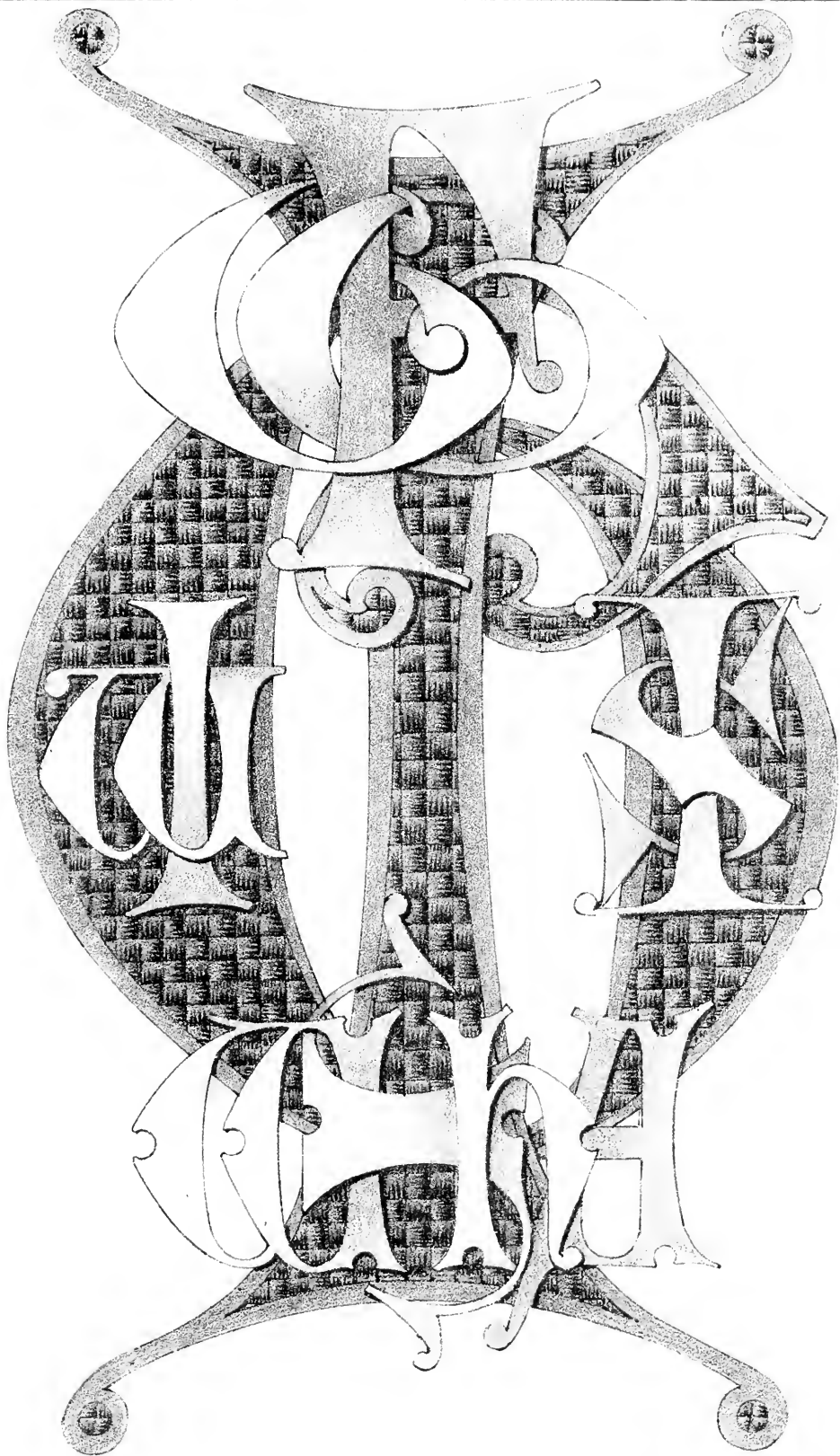


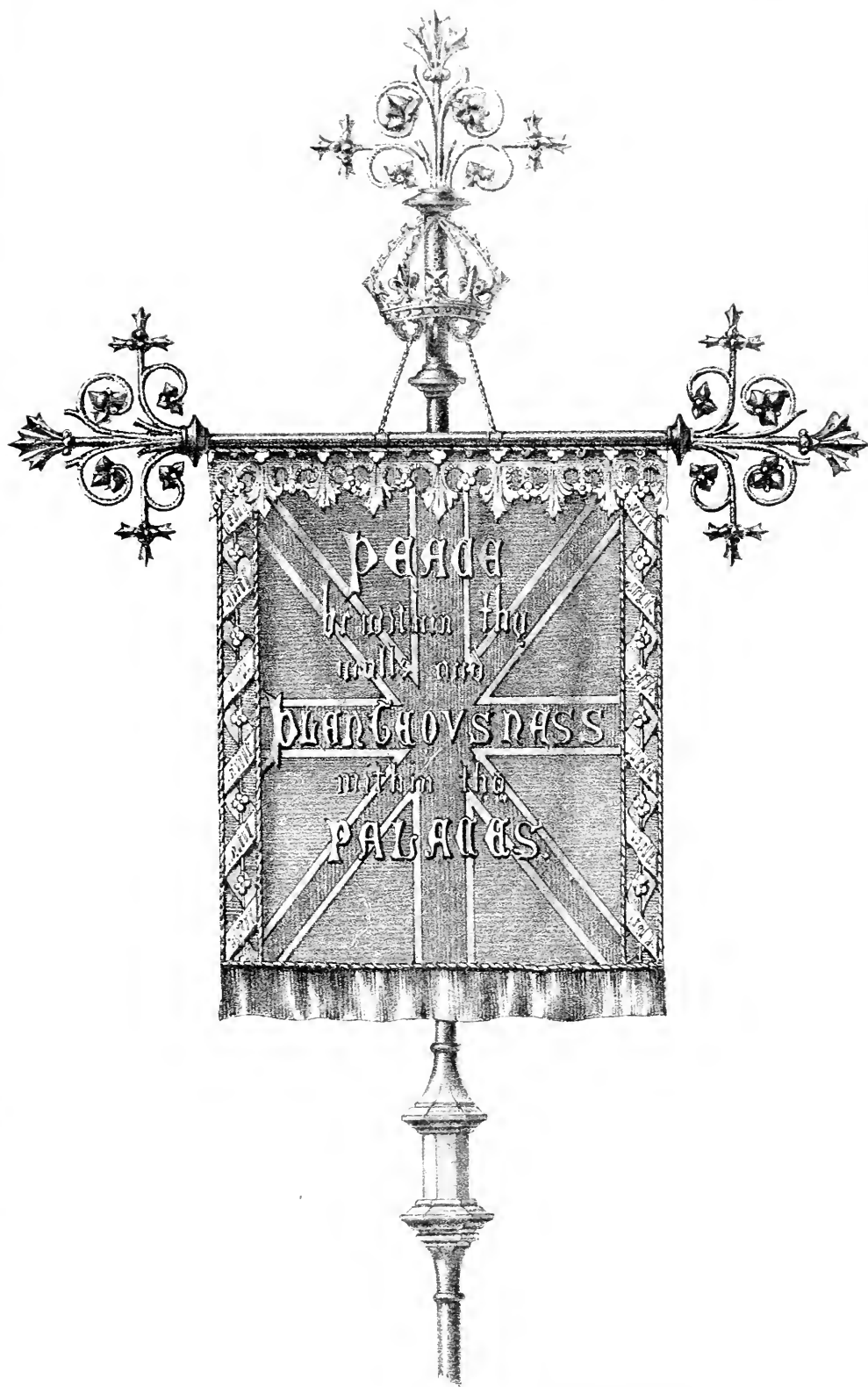


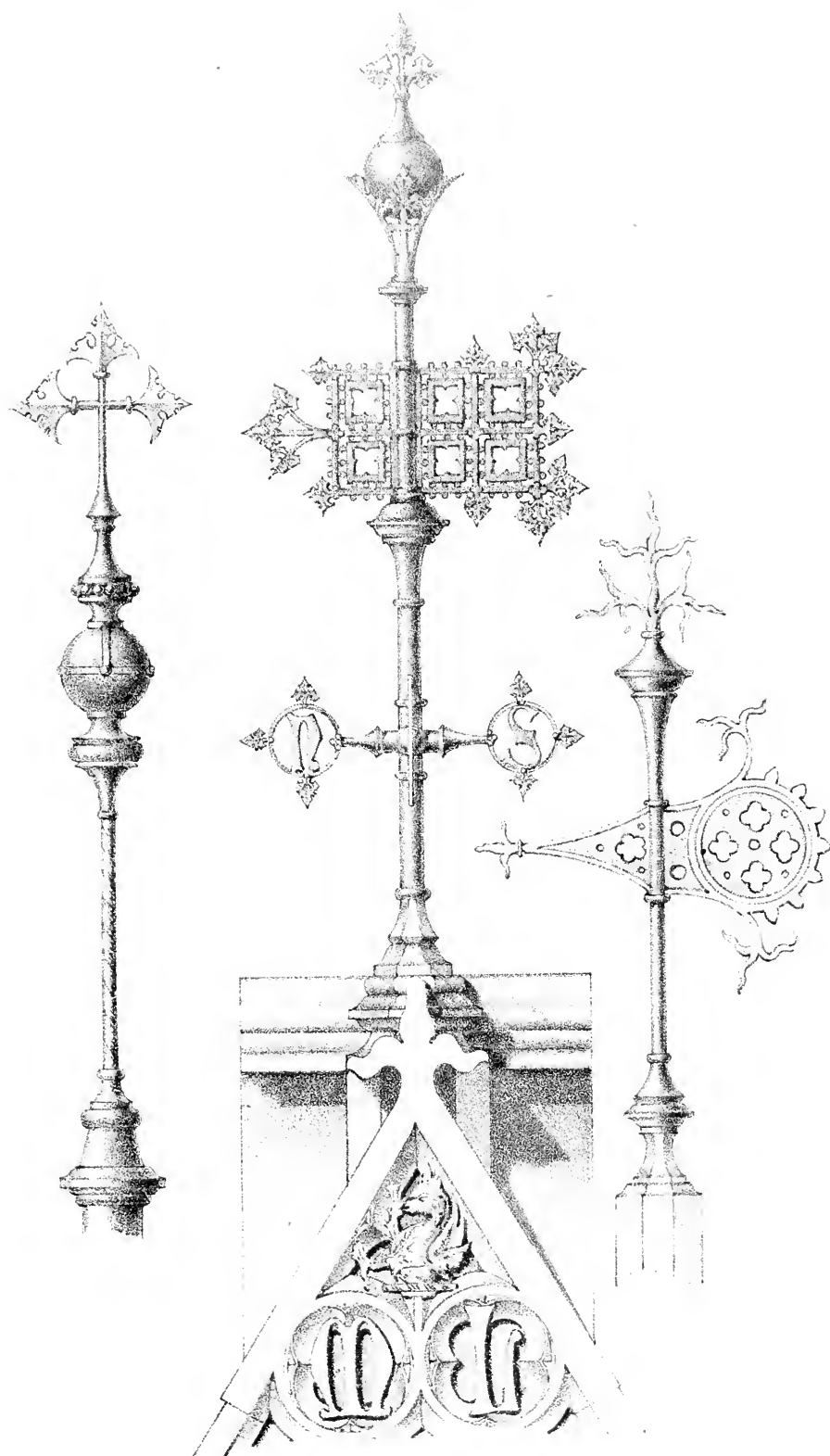


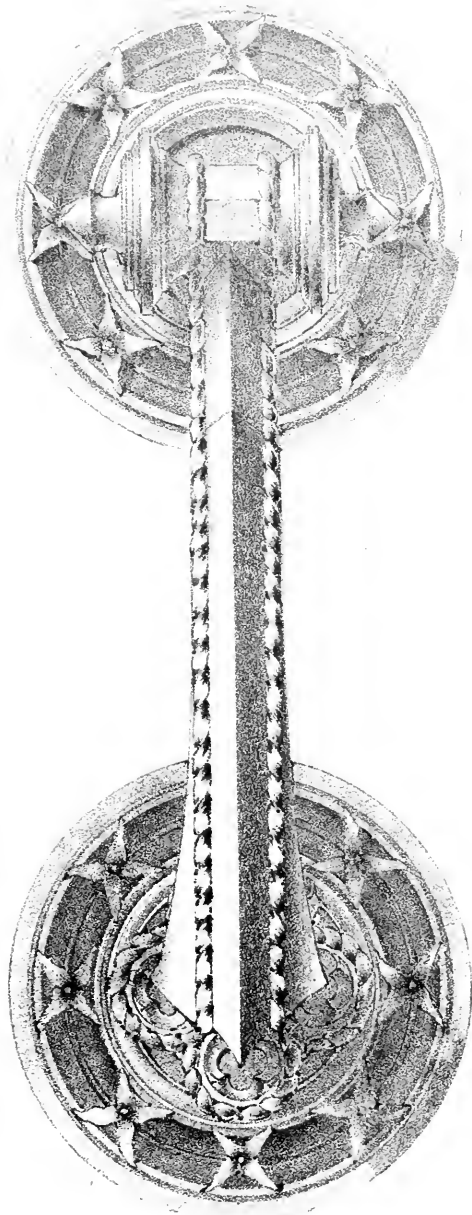


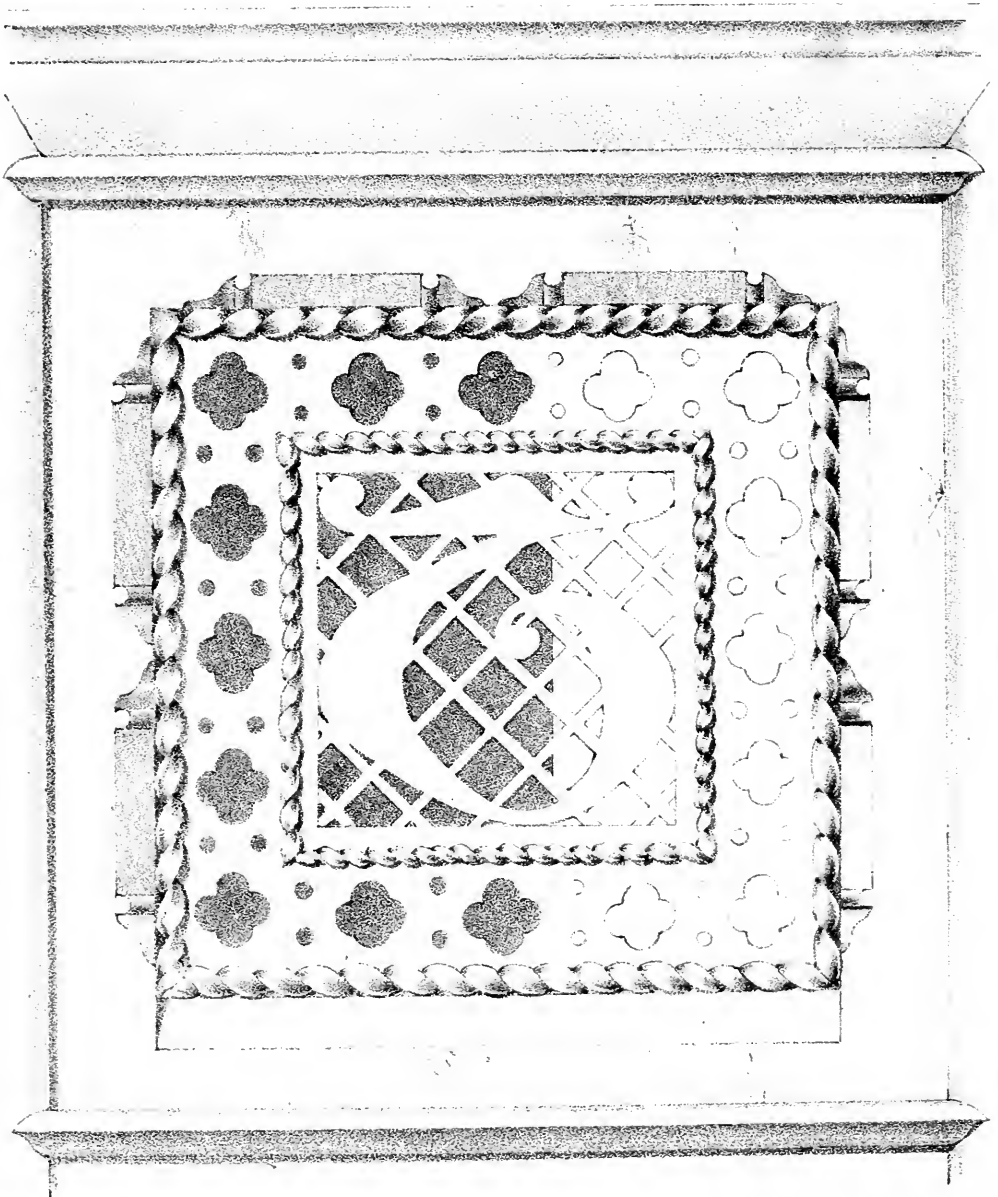
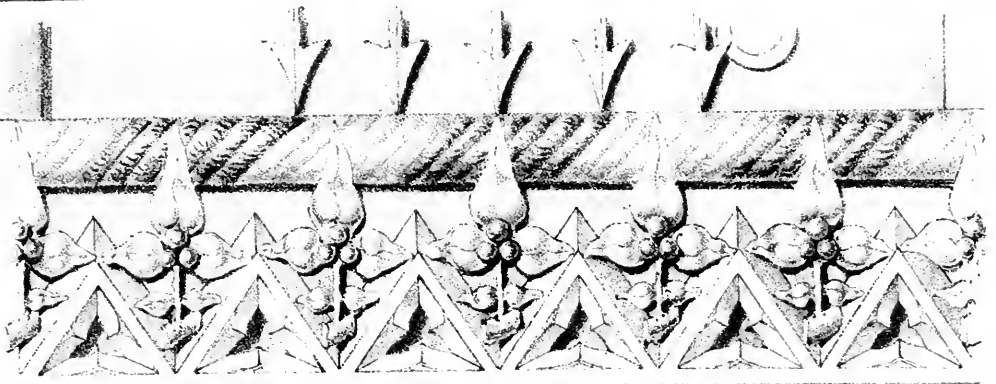


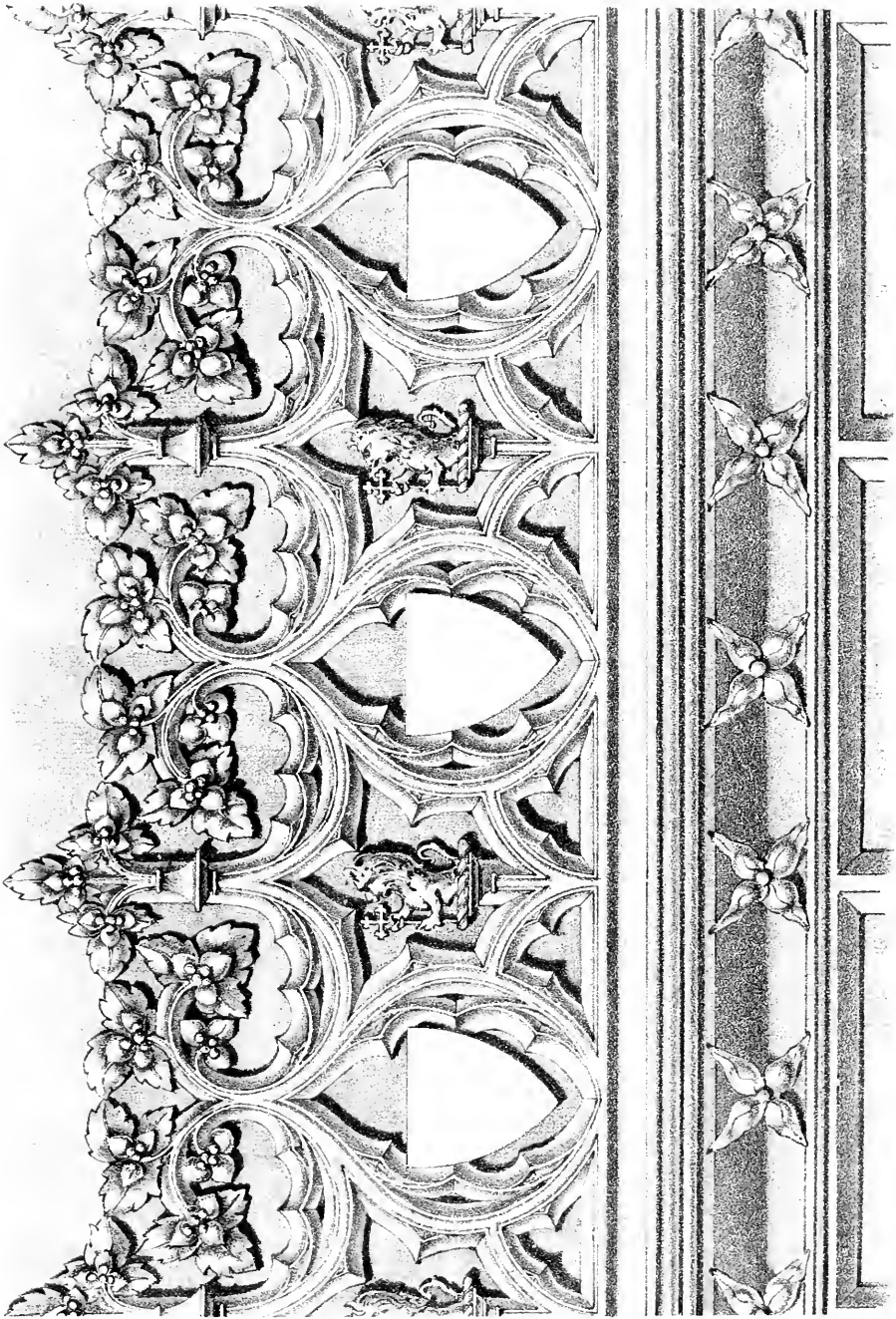


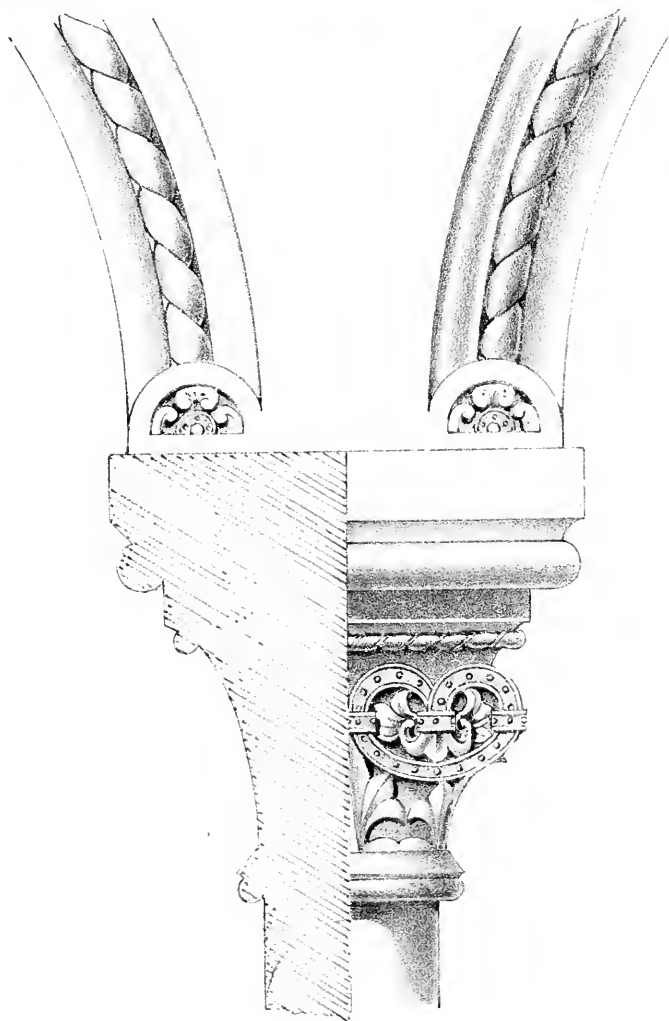
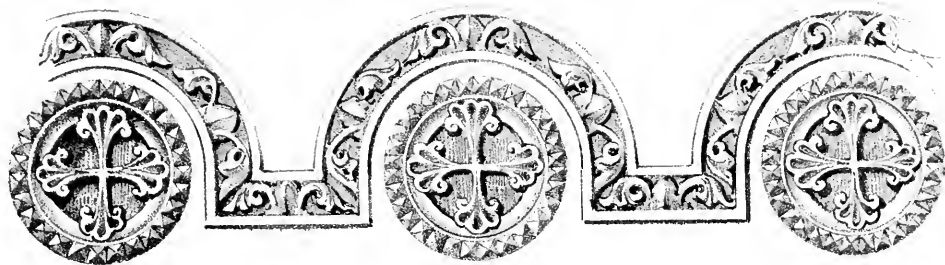


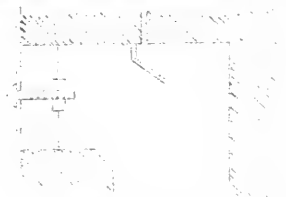
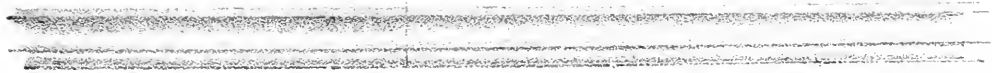
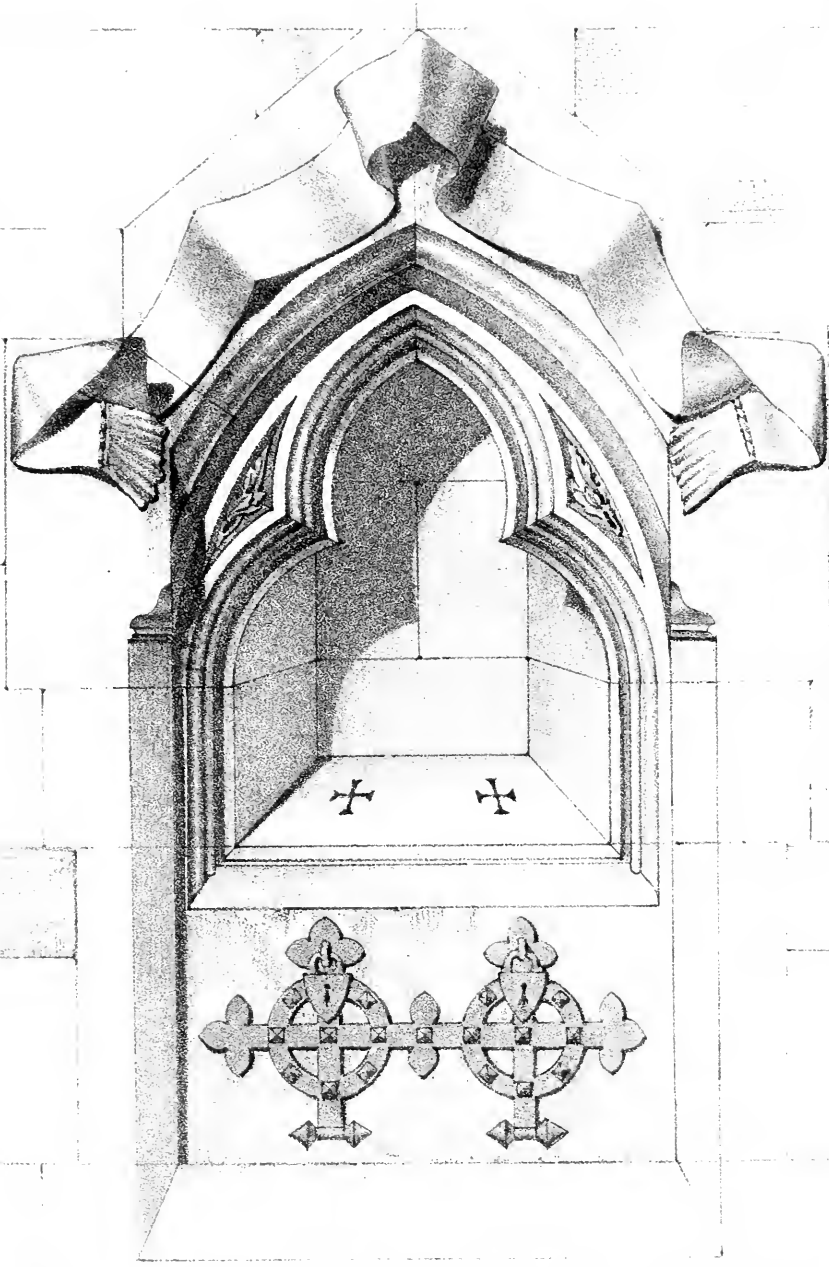


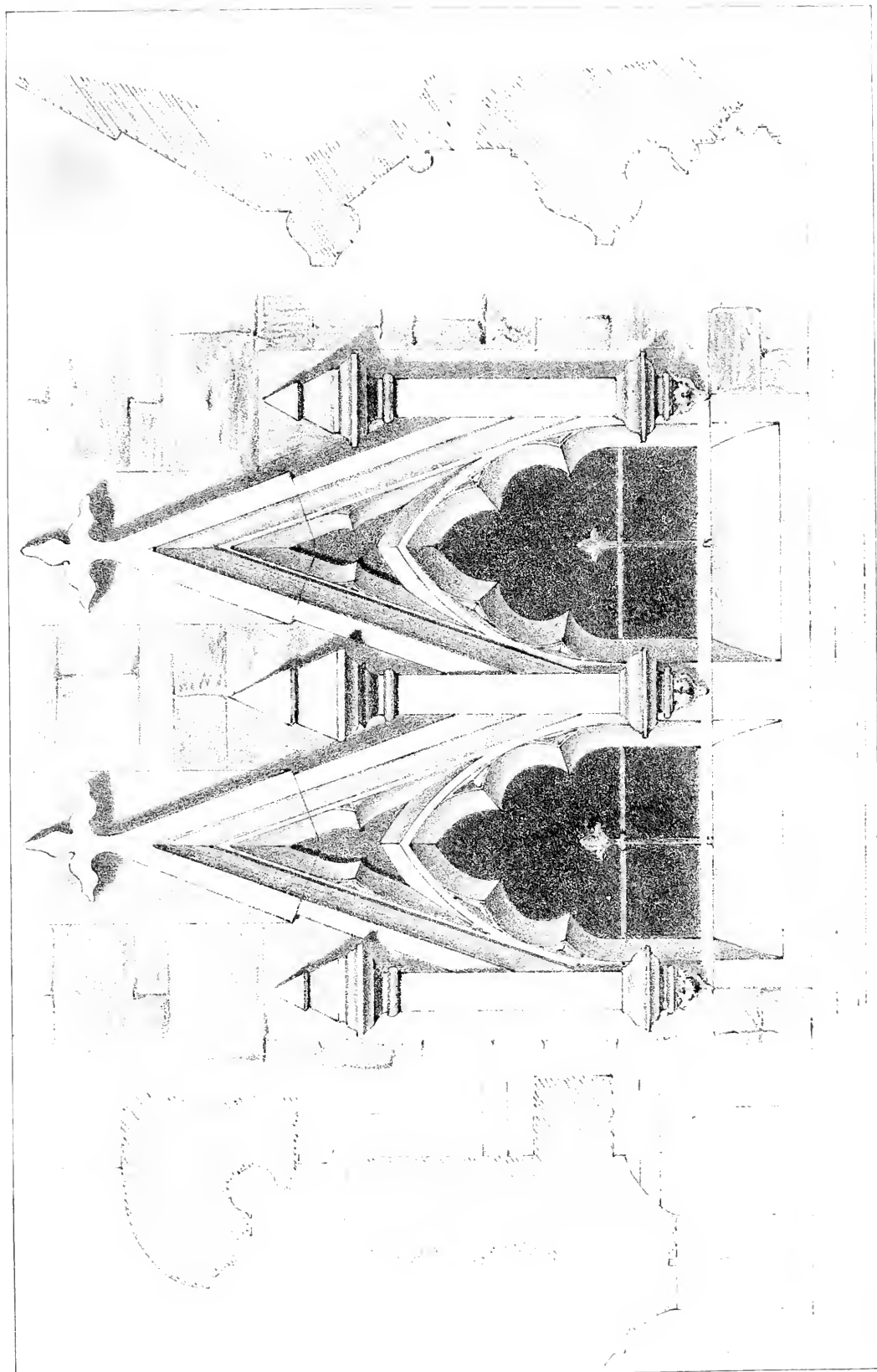


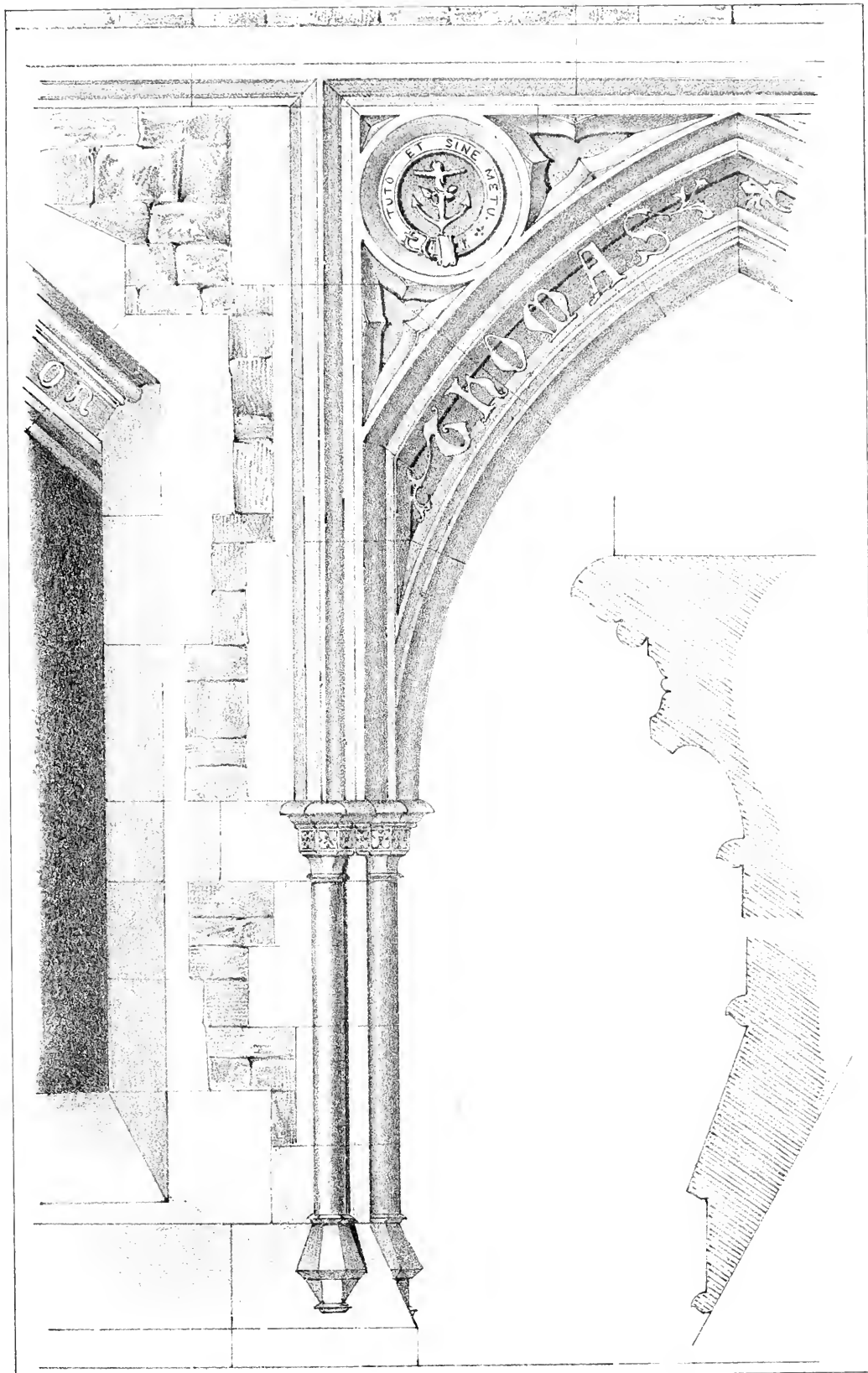


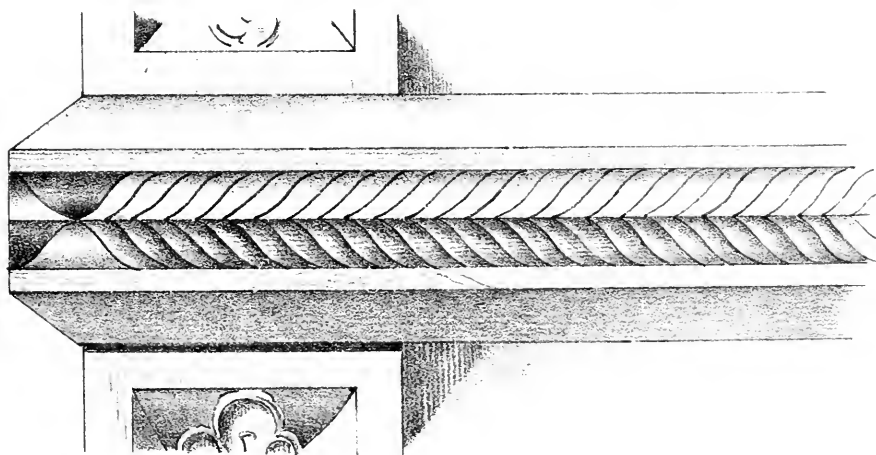
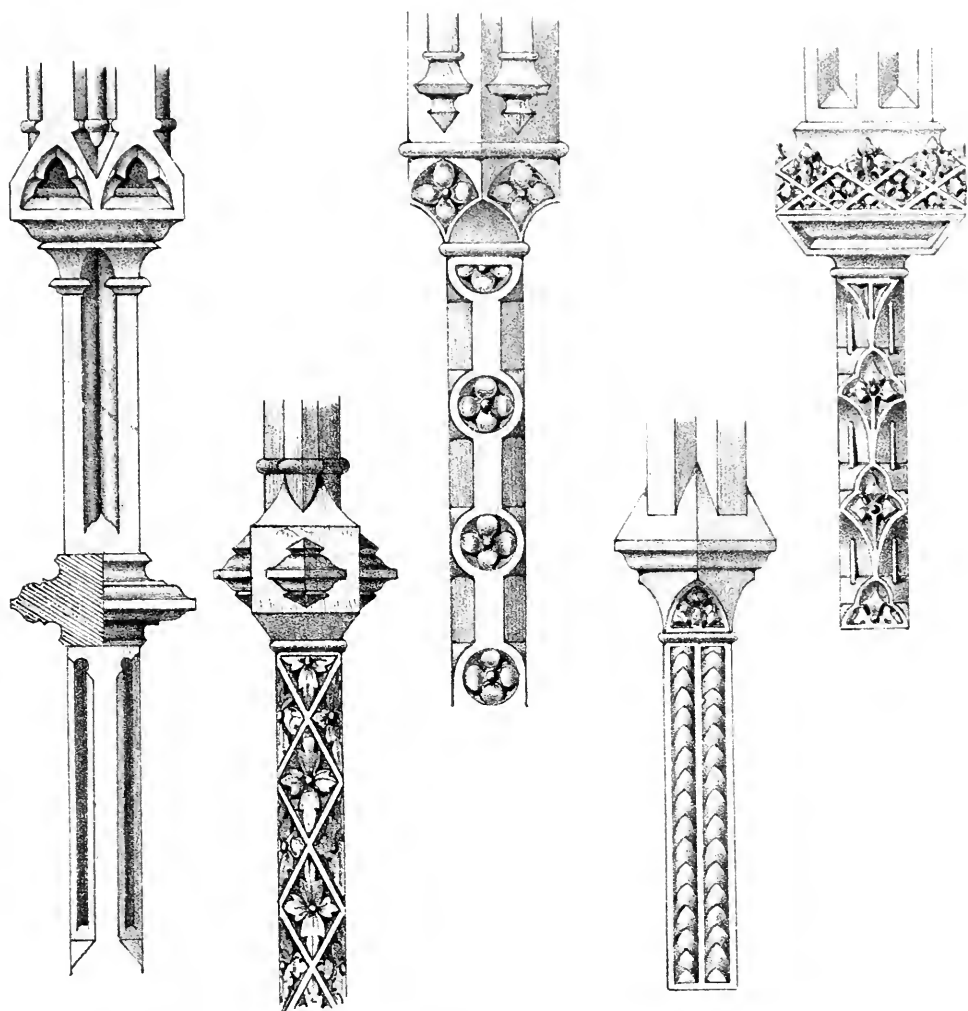


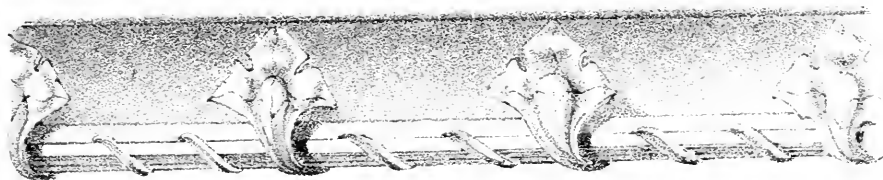
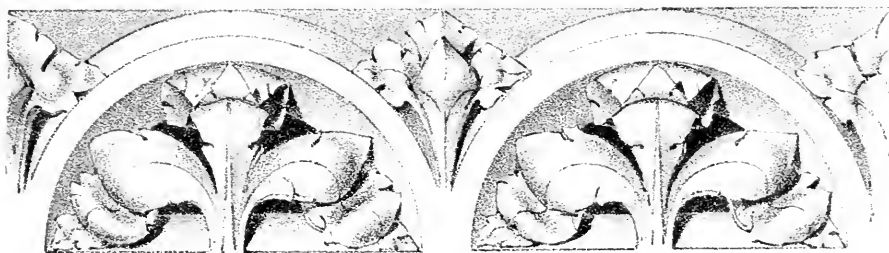
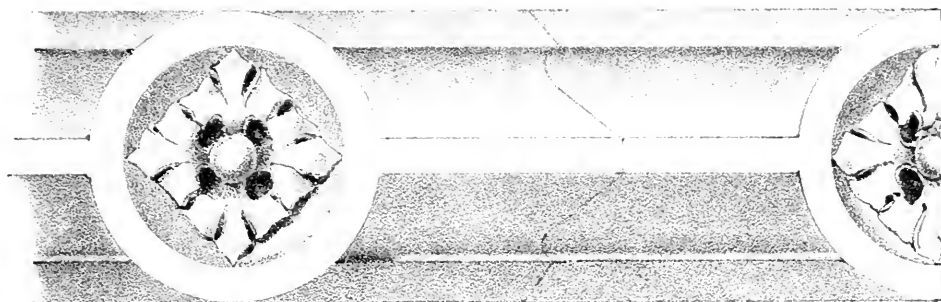


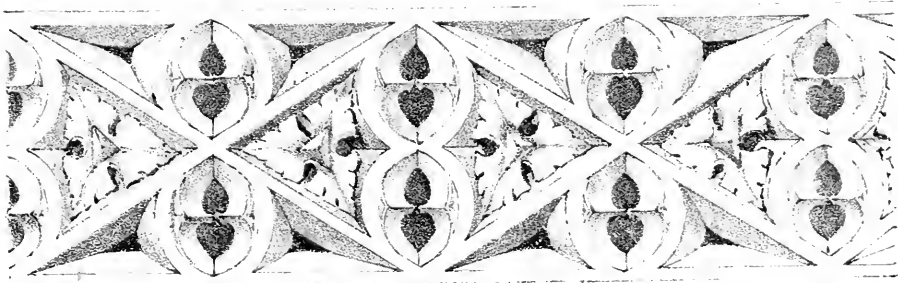
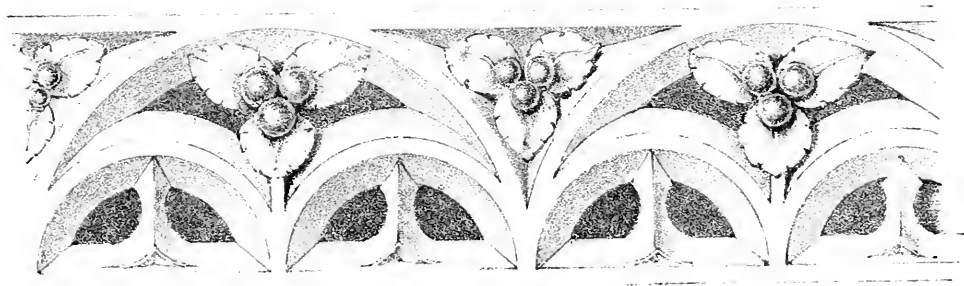
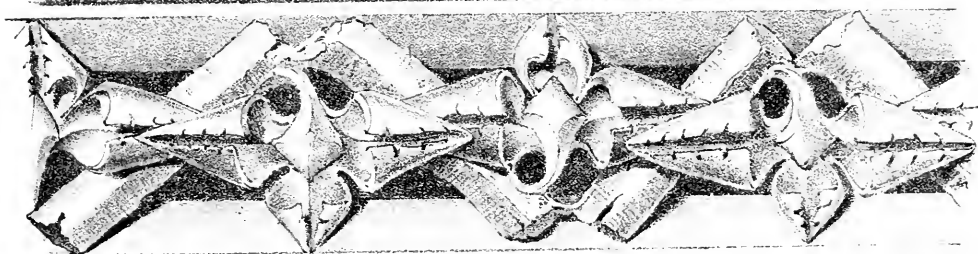
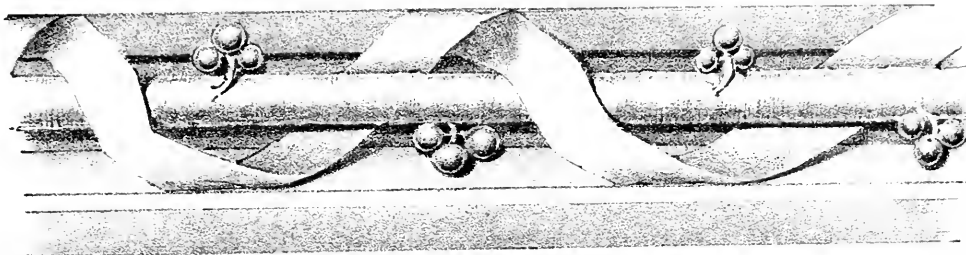


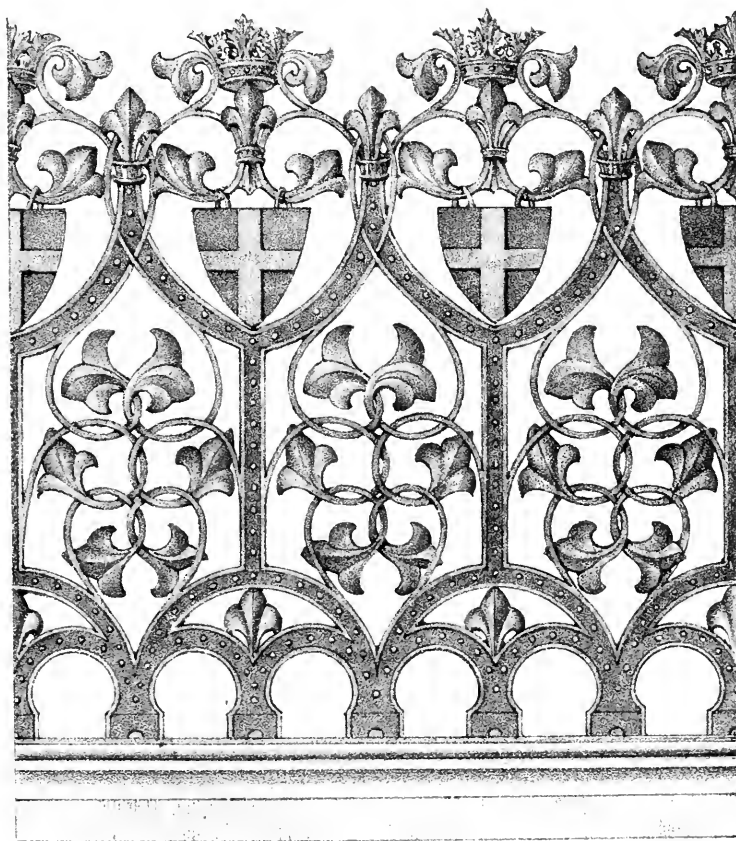


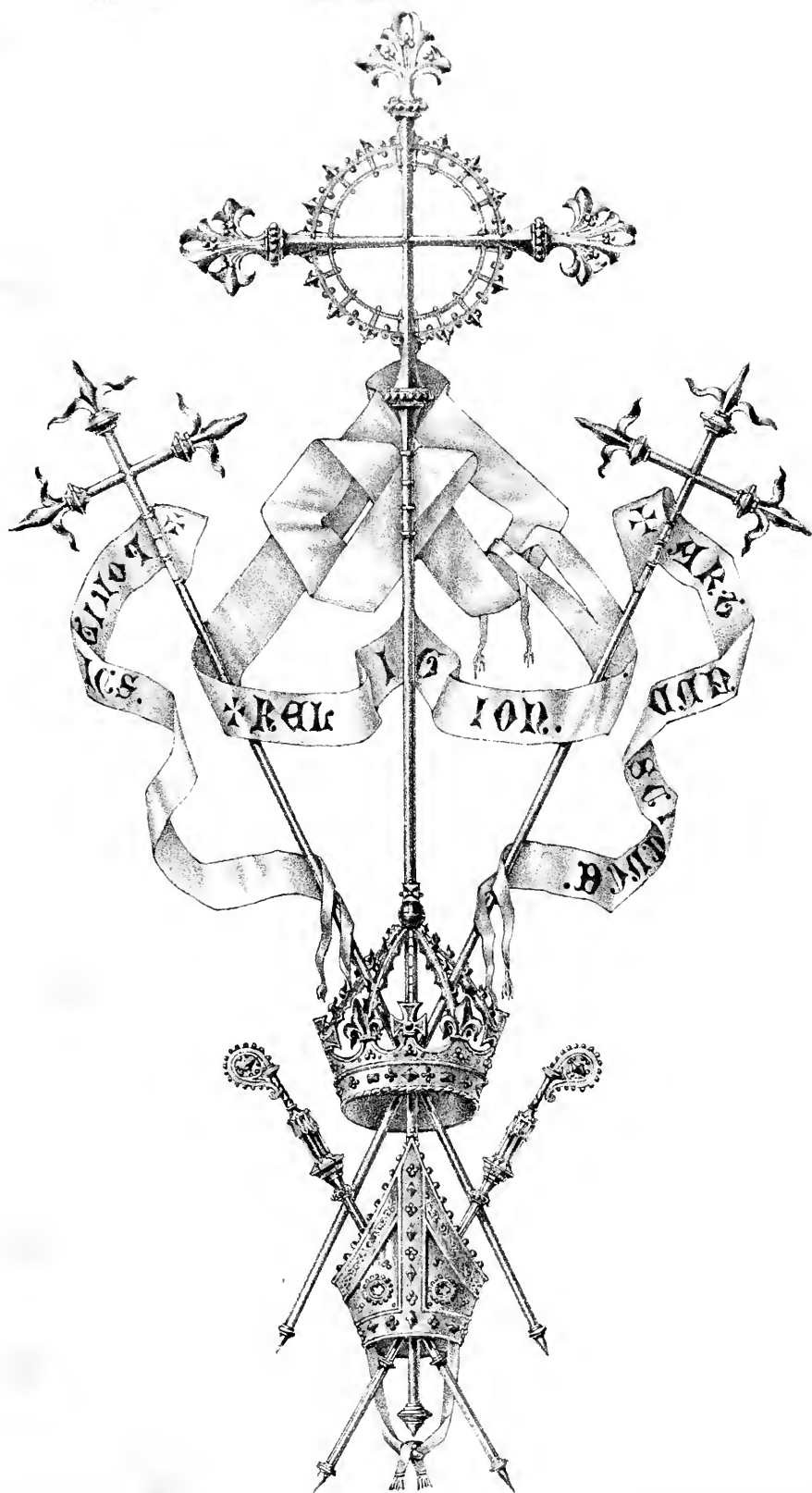














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